

The Rider of DunBroch

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Summary: Hiccup has lost everything. Berk was destroyed, the land burned and barren. As the lone human survivor of the tribe he traveled aimlessly, until news from DunBroch. They are under attack by dragons. Feelings of sympathy drove him there and there he will meet the princess. Together they may find a way to save her people and maybe even fall in love.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1

The Chieftains Council

Berk has been devastated, unsalvageable. The lands have been scotched and nothing can be retrieved. It is believed that a large unknown dragon has attacked Berk unprovoked. The defenses were destroyed and there are no signs of life. Strangely we have found the bodies of the inhabitants haven been given a proper burial before our arrival. It was believed to be done by a passerby.

On this sad day we offer a prayer to the people of Berk, for they died the Viking way. They died defending Berk and their people, against an unknown dragon of mythic proportions. The defenses of Berk were destroyed as if they were nothing. The distressing object of debate is that this may have been a territory war between two dragons. The destruction of Berk was merely the effect of it.

We have no information on this species other than what little remains of the skeleton. It has been determined that the dragon is and estimated 100 feet tall. The species seemed to have a large scale head and tail specializing in crushing objects, explaining the defenses. As for the debatable other dragon there is no information. We ask that all villagers and tribe cooperate to identify these new species for the good of their respective tribes.

Stay safe and stay alert.

In Regards

The Chieftains Council

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

I've read this report over and over again for years. This report was a waste of time, the tribes work together for a few months then they just went back to their old ways as if nothing ever happened. That was what angered me the most; them continuing on as if the world wasn't changed that day. That nothing happened! Haâ€¦I can't blame them though; none of what happened was their fault.

It's been five years since Berk, five years since I've slept in a bed, eaten one of dad's meals, or even been insulted by the others. Personally, I kind of missed the last one. All those mean taunts at least made me feel noticed. Well, when they didn't overlook me for beingâ€¦me. It made things all the more painful when people started liking me during dragon training. Those were some of the best days of my life, having Toothless with me and the villagers not hating me.

I'm a twenty year old now, with no home or bed to call my own. All I have is my stuff and Toothless. Well that's technically not true. I also have Stormfly, Hookfang, Meatlug, and Barf/Belch traveling with me. Oh, I also have the Terrible Terror Sprout with me too. They were the dragons from the kill ring I was able to save afterwards; luckily none of the locks were damaged.

We've travelled for a long time. I didn't have any specific goal in mind, until I heard tales from the southern lands. Dragons were now attacking their homelands. Once I heard that I packed our bags and headed that way. Dragons naturally have a diet of fish mostly. Sure they'll eat chicken or other things but attacking human villages and homelands. It doesn't make sense, but it doesn't need to. Once I lost my home and my people, I promised myself that would never happen to anyone ever again. I may be traveling to a foreign land but there is no other option. Those people need help.

And so we travel to DunBroch

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2

****Merida pov****

Riding through the woods was one of my favorite things to do with Angus. Especially riding along the trails and shooting my arrows at the targets with my new bow. Well it's not that new but ever since my bow was burned I considered any other bow I used new. After I hit the bull's eye on all the targets I travelled through the woods. Ma and Da always worried when I went out on my little trips. Ever since dragons came here that is. Ha, as if I would ever become a dragons meal.

I sighed; the forests of DunBroch have changed from what they once were. What broke my heart the most is that there was fewer bears than there were before. With all that happened in my family I grew a little attached to bears. Plus for all I know the bear was actually a person that fell victim to the witch's magic. There were fewer bears because dragons sometimes preyed on them. Bears didn't go down without a fight. I heard from travelers about grizzlies sometimes fighting them and winning. Those were few and far between though.

We were lucky that Mum and Da obtained information on dragons through the traders that dealt with us and the Vikings. Though we only obtained basic information, we learned one important thing. The only good dragon is a dead dragon. Dragons are savage, mindless, and dangerous. Just like their Viking counterparts. Hearing the sound of a river I got off Angus and went towards it. The sound came from the river where my Ma and I fished at during the time she was under the spell. When she was a bear we actually bonded during that time. I smiled at the memory of her gobbling down those fish I cooked up for her.

I heard a splashing to my left and there was a dragon! A Deadly Nadder, a purple one at that. It looked like it was fishing. I slowly drew my sword and backed away into the forest. Of course luck wasn't on my side when I stepped on a stick and broke it. The Nadder heard it and turned to me. Once it saw me it roared and charged. Losing no time I ran into the woods towards Angus. Once I reached him I sheathed my sword and rode away.

Unfortunately that dragon was flying overhead chasing after us. Thankfully the trees were thick enough that it couldn't get through the trees. Then I saw them, the wisps. They must be here to show me the way. I followed them and they led me to the standing stones. I looked around and the wisps were gone along with that dragon.

"Looks like we lost him Angus" I told him.

Then I heard a roar from the sky. The Nadder quickly dived in on us and with its tail knocked me from Angus. Breaking my new bow, at least it didn't break anything else. Angus on the other hand quickly made his own escape from the dragon.

"Angus!" I called out.

The dragon landed and walked towards me. I drew my sword and prepared to fight it. Once the dragon was close enough I charged it. It quickly spun around and knocked away my sword. When I tried to retrieve it the dragon got in my way. As it came closer to me, I backed away from it. I backed up into one of the standing stones.

I cursed the wisps for this moment. Guess they thought my fate was to be a snack for a dragon. As soon as it was an arm's length from me, I heard another roar from the sky. Apparently this day can get worse. The Nadder then quickly backed away from me. Releasing a breath I looked up and I saw a black dragon. It wasn't like any I saw. Mainly because I saw that it had a rider!

I looked at the masked rider and he drew a sword, a flaming sword! Holding out the sword the Deadly Nadder approached him curiously. He got off the black dragon and approached the Nadder. He then sheathed his sword and removed his helm. He was a brown haired man that seemed

to look like he was on the road (or the sky since he has a dragon) for a long time.

He held his helmet under his arm and held his other hand out to the dragon. I expected it to get bitten off but the Nader pressed his snout against it. After that happened, he began to pet it affectionately. Everything about this was surreal; a dragon rider, a flaming sword, and now he was petting a dragon like it was a bloody pet.

"Go on. There's nothing that'll hurt you here" he whispered to it. The dragon then backed away from him and took off into the sky. Once it was gone he turned to me and put his helm back on. "You better get home before you get into more trouble" he told me. He then mounted his dragon again and flew off. I was too stunned to move. All I could think or say wasâ€|

"Dragon Rider"

* * *

><p>"Ridiculous" Ma said.<p>

"It's the truth!" I exclaimed. After what happened I decided to get back to the castle as quick as I could. Finding Angus was the most difficult part, since he was so spooked by the Deadly Nadder. Once I was back, I immediately told my mother all that happened to me in the forest. It didn't surprise me that this is how she would take it.

"I think those trips into the woods may have addled your mind Merida." she said.

Maudie interrupted us "Your majesties, the three lords have arrived."

"What? Oh, I almost forgot. Merida, clean yourself up best you can and meet us later so that we may greet our guests." I sighed in response and made my way to my room. I cleaned myself up the best I could. Then I made my way to the throne room and everything was just how it was the first time we all gathered here. I went to my seat and waited for this to start.

Lord Dingwall said "Your majesties, thank you for this meeting. After all, what we have to discuss is of great importance."

Lord Macintosh continued "Aye, these bloody dragons are going to be the death of us!"

Mum stated "We all know that you are suffering from these beasts, but we must not panic in these times. United, we will survive."

The talk was long and boring. They merely discussed fortifications, formations, and defenses to combat the dragons. Nothing really interesting. Fortunately Da noticed the bored look on my face and sent me on my way, I was happy to be away from them. I thought about him, that Dragon rider. Ma was right a man riding a dragon was silly, but I saw him with my own eyes. How could I deny it?

He told that Deadly Nadder to leave. If he could really command the dragons, then he can get rid of them for us! I have to go out and

find him. Since night has fallen, it'll be easier to sneak out. Grabbing my cloak and my sword (another bow too), I made way to the stables. Fortunately there wasn't anyone in the halls to question what I was doing. Once I got outside I made a beeline to Angus and saddled him up. With Angus I rode out of the castle gates, determined to find this Dragon Rider.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3

I'm not proud to admit this, but I think I may have made a mistake. Searching for a dragon and it's rider that favors black in the dead of night was a bad idea. I ended up staying the night in a homemade shelter. The only plus side was that it didn't rain. In the morning I foraged for some berries (not the nightshade kind) and I cooked a small rabbit that was nearby. While I had my quick breakfast, Angus chewed on some grass. After our short meal, I got up on Angus and started my search again.

I hope Mum and Da aren't too worried about me. Even if Ma didn't believe the rider part I think she could believe in my encounter with the dragon. I remembered the concern on her face when I told her. I searched for a long time, even returning to the standing stones hoping he was nearby. I found nothing though.

Then I saw them, the wisps. Alright this time they better lead me to someplace where I won't almost get killed again. I followed the trail of wisps in a trot. I wasn't too eager to be around more dragons that want me dead. The trail lasted me quite some time. Apparently where I was going wasn't anywhere nearby. At the end of the trail was a less dense part of the forest. It was a more out of the way place, most would try to avoid since it was off most trails. Sadly again, I found nothing.

Of course, they wouldn't be any help this time either. Then I heard the flapping of large wings. I got off Angus and drew my bow. I moved forward cautiously and hid behind a tree. I peeked out from behind it to see the black dragon! It was lying down in a clearing. Taking a closer look at it, half of its tail was artificial. A replacement for a tail, I wouldn't have thought of that. It seemed to be quite worn though. It would need replacing. I holstered my bow and walked towards it. If he was here, then the rider can't be too far behind.

The dragon then noticed me, got up and growled at me. I stopped immediately and my hand involuntarily went to my sword. I stood perfectly still so none of my movements would be considered threatening. He approached me only to stop a few feet from me. He snarled and flapped his wings at me (trying to intimidate me). Looks like the wisps led me into another dangerous situation.

"Easy there bud" I heard. I turned to look at the tree nearby to see the rider up in a tree on the lowest branch. He was apparently reading over a book. "I think if she meant any harm, she would have drawn her sword by now." He finished. He jumped out of tree and walked over the dragon, then petted it warmly. He was actually good looking. Not too sound shallow or anything but some of the men that have tried to woo meâ€¦.well let's just say that after I punched them

in the face, it was an improvement.

He turned to me "I'm surprised to see you again. I thought you would be riding far away from dragons rather than trying to approach one."

More relaxed then before I stated. "I don't give up that easily. Besides it's not that surprising that we would meet again, I did search you out"

"You searched out a man with a pet dragon?" he asked. I nodded in response. "That's crazy."

"Not as crazy as training a dragon for a pet." I countered.

He chuckled "Fair enough, but it's actually _dragons_" He then whistled and I heard the sounds of wings all around us. The next thing I knew, we were surrounded by dragons. There was a Deadly Nader, Gronckle, Hideous Zippleback, Terrible Terror and a Monstrous Nightmare. He's trained all these dragons? Just facing one of these would make men wet their kilts. Except for the Terrible Terror they would just laugh at it until it attacked their face. I looked closer and all the dragons (except for the terror) seemed to have some packs strapped to them. Supplies and other things I assumed.

"Well since you searched me out. That means you must want to talk, let's introduce ourselves. My name is Hiccup. Yours?" he asked.

"I'm Merida"

"Merida, this is Stormfly, Meatlug, Barf/Belch, Sprout and Hookfang." He said gesturing to the dragons. Patting the black dragon he said "This is Toothless" He snorted at me in response. The name made no sense to me. It had teeth, I saw them. Big, shiny, white ones that looked like it could snap me in half.

"Iâ€¦I recognize the species of the others, but what exactly is Toothless?"

He smiled "He's a Night Fury" My mind stopped. A Night Fury?! From what we gathered from the traders, no Viking has ever survived an encounter with a Night Fury. It was the one dragon that they feared to encounter. Almost everything about the species was unknown. I said "Wow." As if he was bored by me, he snorted at me and walked away from us. He laid down in the shade of the trees. Then the other dragons soon followed suit.

"Don't worry about him. He doesn't trust that easily." Hiccup said. "So you said you searched me out. Why?"

"A proposition" I started. "I saw how you handled that dragon yesterday and I think that is just what we need to get rid of the dragons."

"Ah no. I don't get _rid_ of dragons. I train them. If you want someone to go be your dragon exterminator, talk to some Vikings. I don't do that sort of thing." He stated and walked off.

"Wait! Um, you need help right?" I thought quickly looking between him and the dragons. "And supplies? From what I can see, your

prosthetic, saddle and bags seem a bit damaged. Your packs aren't brimming with food either. "

"We can fish what we need." He bluntly stated.

"Oh yeah, that'll work. Fish with a group of dragons in a country that's trying to kill dragons, not exactly the brightest thing to do. If you come with me I could try to give you and your dragons immunity in DunBroch." I have no idea if it was possible, but I can't let him slip away from me.

"Immunity? You don't have the kind of authority for that." He countered.

"My Mum and Da, are the king and queen" I stated.

"WHAT?! You're the Princess?!" he asked bewildered

"Yes, I am." I answered proudly

"From what I heard the typical southern princess was supposed to be dainty, indoor types" he stated.

"Well, I'm the atypical princess" I said slightly offended.

"Alright, alright bad call." He said. "Well you do make a point. I do need food and other things. It's not easy making repairs to my leg and Toothless tail out here. I need materials for that and some supplies, but this seems a little dangerous."

"Well the lords are here with their men, so it would be a bit dangerous" I mumbled

"Oh no, this definitely sounds like a trap. I've heard how they deal with dragons." he stated as he took a step back.

"Well when you have a dragon trying to kill you it's understandable. Look, just come with me and I'll deal with it." I stated. He looked at me dubiously. "I can't promise anything else other than I will try not to get you killed." He sighed at that.

"If I come with you, but we do this my way. No killing." He stated.

"As long as the people are protected we'll do it anyway you want."

"Then we have an agreement. The moment I see an arrow or a spear coming my way though, I'm outta there." He said.

"Alright, it's already midday so we should get there." I stated.

"Ok then. Toothless!" He called. The Night Fury immediately bounded up to him. "Looks like we're finally going back to civilization Toothless" He groaned in response. "Relax Toothless. It won't be that bad." He gave him an unamused look. It was rather odd, seeing a dragon expressing emotions that I thought were distinctly human.

"Ok it could be a little bad." The dragon swatted the back of his

head with his tail. "Will you stop that? Besides I can fix your tail if this works out." He moaned in response. He then chirped in curiosity and bounded away from us. Not sure what it meant we followed him. We found him standing in front of Angus, whom was on his hind legs in freight.

I ran up to Angus and calmed him down. He was still a little jittery but he was better. "Easy there Toothless. I know your excited for seeing your first horse but take it easy. No need to scare him to death." He explained.

Toothless then slowly approached Angus and sniffed him. Angus neighed in response to it. Hiccup clapped his hands together "Well we seem to be acquainted. Let's get going." We mounted our rides and Hiccup put on his helm. Then the other dragons came up to us. "Oh um, you guys stay here. I'll come back for you guys in a day or two. Don't worry, there's a river nearby for you guys to fish. Stormfly your in charge, keep them together. If you come across anyone, just get out of here and find a safe place. I'll find you." Stormfly then saluted him with its wing. Dragons just keep getting stranger and stranger.

"Why not just bring them with us?" I asked

"We're already bringing one dragon to a guarded castle. I don't want to give them more reasons to shoot me down." He answered.

Fair enough

"Well then let's go" I stated and we were off.

Riding off with Angus I travelled away from this place. Hiccup and Toothless flew above the trees until we were clear of the forest. Then they flew alongside us just above our heads. I supposed he didn't want people to think a dragon was hunting me. Also I could explain why I was with a dragon if we encountered someone. I hope Mum and Da don't kill them.

This situation reminded me of a saying I heard from the servants. What was it again? Out of the frying pan and into the fire.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4

****Eleanor pov****

I was worried sick about Merida. No one has seen her since last night and Angus was gone. She could be anywhere. When a messenger came to tell us that a flock of dragons were seen near a village the three lords volunteered to monitor it in case of attack, while some of the others went to search for Merida. I don't understand; why she would just get up and leave? Did I upset her by dismissing her story too easily? Maybe she wanted my attention. Since these dragons have come to DunBroch I have been preoccupied with the affairs of DunBroch.

Suddenly I heard a scream; it belonged to Maudie. I have heard her scream so often it's recognizable. She ran towards me and screamed "DRAGON!" A dragon?! Here? I have to get the guards in formation,

evacuate everyone elseâ€¦.then I heard Merida. I couldn't hear what she said but it was definitely her voice. I ran towards the doors with Maudie in tow and threw them open to see, something I did not understand.

The guards had circled, containing the threat with their weapons drawn and the archers at the ready. Merida was in the middle of the circle screaming "Don't shoot!" repeatedly at the guards. I looked closer and what I saw made me whisper "Dragon Rider". She was right, there was a rider. Flaming sword and all, I'm going to have to apologize to Merida. He sat upon a dragon; sword at the ready in case the guards attacked. She must have brought him here. All our talking about how to defend DunBroch must have made her think he could help. Maybe he could be of some help to us.

In order to gain control of this situation I walked towards them. "Guards, lower your arms" I commanded. They failed to obey, probably out of their duty to protect us "If Merida brought this man here then I doubt he would pose a threat. Lower your arms." This time they obeyed. I walked pass the guards and addressed the rider "I have lowered our arms sir; I ask that you lower yours." He sheathed his sword and removed his helm to reveal a brown haired man. He was handsome looking; he must not be from DunBroch. Well that and we would have heard of a Dragon Rider before now.

"You are sir?" I asked. He dismounted from his dragon and gave a slight bow to me. "Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the third you majesty" he replied.

_Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the third? I know that name. Where do I know that name? _

"I assume you are a traveler of sorts due to your appearance" I stated

"You assumed correctly. I only arrived in DunBroch a few days ago." He responded

"Well considering how long my _daughter_ has been gone, you must be hungry. Maudie, prepare a meal for our guest and hisâ€¦.pet." Maudie although was afraid she led the two of them to into the castle. I considered asking his dragon to wait outside but I did not want to cause more trouble. I sternly said to Merida "We need to talk." Merida and I walked into the throne room. Upon arrival I had the servants clear out so that we may talk privately.

I turned to Merida "Start talking" Before Merida could even speak a word, the doors to the hall burst open. It was Fergus. "There is a dragon in the dining room! Will someone please tell me why it is our guest?!" Fergus shouted. Looks like Maudie informed him about our peculiar guests.

"For that explanation, I'll leave it Merida" I replied.

Merida repeated her tale of what happened to her when she first encountered him. Then stated why she brought him here. Her line of thinking wasn't preposterous, but reckless. She went straight towards a dragon when we told her not too. I had to agree with her though. If he is a specialist on dragons then he may be just what we need. After all, we are far from being on good terms with the Vikings. If it were

like in the good old days though, I'd ask him to leave out of fear of what he might do. Desperate times call for desperate measures I suppose.

"Merida, why didn't you just tell us of this dragon rider in the first place" Fergus asked.

"I did, but somebody didn't believe me" she stated as she glared at me. "Look I've seen what he can do. I think he can help us. Just talk to him for a bit. It's not any skin off your nose"

* * *

><p>Merida pov

After some more convincing they agreed to sit down with Hiccup. He might just be able to help us. I hope. By now Hiccup and Toothless should have finished their meals. We entered the dining room. Hiccup was sitting back in a chair, obviously satisfied by his meal. Mum said "I trust everything was to your liking"

"Yes it was. Judging by Toothless he enjoyed his basket of fish as well." When I looked at Toothless he still had his head in a large basket searching for more fish. I heard one of the servants whisper behind me fearfully "The dragon ate that lot of fish so quickly and it still looked hungry afterwards." We all sat down on the other side of the table, across from Hiccup.

"Glad to hear it lad, but let us skip these pleasantries and get down to business. If we take too long these beasts will destroy and eat everything we have" Da said.

We talked to him about all that has happened to DunBroch. The burning villages, the taken livestock, who and what we lost to the dragons basically. All the while we talked Hiccup's expression got grimmer and grimmer. We've lost a lot to them that is for sure. Then we got to the subject of species we did not recognize. Due to the limited information we got from the traders, we did not know what they were or how to fight them.

Hiccup then removed a book from one of Toothless' saddle bags (the book looked like it was in a fireplace for a bit). It was the book I saw him read earlier today. He called it the Book of Dragons. The strange thing about the book was some of what was in it looked new. Like some of the information was just added. With that aside, the species that we couldn't recognize were listed in this book. Timberjacks, skrills, thunderdrums, the number of species seemed endless. There were even dragons that no one in DunBroch has seen. When we returned the book to Hiccup Mum seemed reluctant to do so. I couldn't blame her. The information in that book was worth a fortune. I don't even think the traders knew of most of what was in that book.

Then Hiccup suggested what we could do in our current position. His first suggestion was to abandon DunBroch. After we retrieved our jaws from the floor he stated that would be our only option if they disagreed with his other suggestion. He stated that if we disagreed with either of the suggestions it could end in the deaths of many of our own in fighting off the dragons. He then told us his plan to protect our homes and ourselves. His plan was exciting! I wanted to

be a part of it. I even volunteered to be a part of it.

Da stated "Well lad this talk has been illuminating, but what you are suggesting is going to require the collaboration of all the clans for this to work. I will have to present it to the lords tomorrow. Until we have an answer for you, you are welcome to stay here Hiccup." The doors opened and the three lords walked through.

Lord MacGuffin said "Your majesties you'll be glad to hear that the village is safe. Those dragons were probably scared off by our fearsome presence."

Lord Dingwall stated "Sadly we could not findâ€|Lady Merida. You've returned."

I replied "Yes and I did not return alone." I gestured to Hiccup and Toothless. Once they noticed Toothless they shouted "Dragon!" and drew their arms. Hiccup stood up and drew his sword while Toothless roared at them. Mum stood up and boomed "Enough off this! Hiccup is our guest, along with his pet dragon. He is an expert on dragons and has agreed to assist us in these bad times. Now it is late and there have been rooms prepared for you all. I ask that you all go to them and rest for the night."

Da continued "And if there are any injuries or deaths in the morning, I'll deal with the perpetrator like I dealt with the bear in my throne room. Understood?!" They all mumbled understood and put away their weapons. After that the servants lead them all to their own rooms. Fortunately the one for Hiccup was big enough for Toothless too. Mum figured that it was best if the dragon was near him. In case anything went wrong, for him or for us (more likely the latter).

When Mum, Da and I were the only ones left in the room he said "Well this has been an exciting day hasn't it. Can't wait to see what tomorrow brings."

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

****Merida pov****

I awoke worried. Worried that someone might have tried to kill Hiccup or Toothless. I went to find Mum in the library to ask if she had seen him. Once I walked into the library I saw her in a mess of papers mumbling things like 'they couldn't be the same person' or 'I know that name'. When she faced a nest of papers, she was looking for something. Its best to leave her be when that happens. Otherwise she might rant about losing her place when she did. I walked through the halls and came across Maudie. I asked her about Hiccup. She said she saw Hiccup and his pet in the dining hall. Leaving her behind, I went to the Dining hall. He's still breathing at least.

When I entered the room I saw my brothers playing with Toothless. Well they ran around him playing around with his wings or tail while he lied down. Those three became fond of dragons since they came to DunBroch. They listened to all the tales that the traders from the archipelago had to offer. Da was a bit jealous about that. They pay

more attention them, then to his tale about his fight with the demon bear Mor'du. Mainly because he told his tale to them more times than I care to count. I looked around the table to see Hiccup sitting down pouring over some book with designs in it by the looks of things, while looking up at Toothless once in a while. Deciding to keep him company, I approached him.

"Morning Hiccup" I greeted.

"Good morning Merida" he responded. He closed the book so that I could not tell what he was working on. All I saw that it was designed like a strange spear. Oh well not my business anyway. "Glad to see you're still breathing" I stated.

"Same here, but if anything were to happenâ€¦well Toothless is a light sleeper" he chuckled. I chuckled along with him but after having a first-hand experience at how fearsome he could be, I doubt any who would attempt to kill them would live for very long.

"So...first impressions?" I inquired

He looked at the triplets "To be honest they're a little annoying"

I stated jokingly "I meant first impression of DunBroch, not my brothers. Besides they're little brothers. If they're not annoying they're not doing their job" He looked at me skeptically "I don't have any siblings so I'll take your word for it"

"So?" I pressed.

"So I really can't say much about it. The land itself is beautiful and pristine. The people on the other hand have been avoiding me with or without Toothless. Sure when I first came here I avoided them for the sake of my dragons, but now I am living among them again. The people don't really seem to like me. I guess you guys aren't fond of outsiders here."

"Nay we like outsiders. Outsiders with dragons are something new." I stated

"And something new is meant to be feared" he continued sadly.

We heard a small roar from Toothless and he stood up. He then walked away from the triplets and laid down facing the walls. "Come on you three leave him be" I insisted. They looked disappointed until they saw something from under the table. They rushed under and Hiccup made a small yelp. He got out of his chair. The triplets then appeared on the other side of the table with his sword. They pressed a switch and the fire blade emerged from the hilt. Hamish waved it around above his head for a bit, and then gave each of his brothers a turn.

Hiccup looked to me "Any chance if I asked them nicely they would return my sword to me?"

"Never worked for me. Try bargaining for them." I suggested.

"Bargaining, huh? Alright you three interested in a trade." He

inquired. The triplets turned to him and sheathed the sword. They did their usual stance whenever I had to make a deal with them. Hiccup withdrew a small grey ball from a pouch around his waist. He threw it against the ground at his feet and a big puff of smoke erupted from the ground completely covering him. When the smoke cleared he was gone. I jumped when I heard "You three interested?"

I turned to see that Hiccup was standing behind my brothers. They all jumped and wooed at him. They all nodded at him and held their hands out. I asked "How'd you get over there?" As he handed three of the balls to each of them he said "You guys were so busy looking at the smoke you didn't notice that I slid under the table and got behind these three" I rolled my eyes at him. I thought he had real magic for a moment. Once they had the balls they returned his sword to him. "Save them for when you get in trouble" he finished. The three of them ran out of the room and from what I heard, used one already.

"How'd you make those? I've never heard of such a thing" I stated.

"I had a run in with a Smothering Smokebreath a couple years back. Thanks to that encounter I was able to make these smoke balls."

"A Smothering what?"

"It's a small dragon that specializes in using smoke it makes to hide and escape" he explained

"Oh, haven't heard of that one before" After I said that my stomach loudly growled. It was so loud Toothless got up, and looked at me. Slightly embarrassed I asked "You interested in some breakfast Hiccup?"

"Yeah, I could eat" Toothless then got up and stood beside Hiccup. He then made some strange sound, it sounded like he was going to throw up. Hiccup then clamped his snout shut and said "No, no, no bud. I'm not that hungry. Now swallow." Toothless swallowed whatever was going to come. "Good boy" He turned to me. I imagine my face was a cross between curiosity and disgust. He smiled nervously "Dragons will spit up fish for others to eat"

I stated "Just like a mama bird will spit up worms for her babies." He removed his hands from Toothless snout. He said "Sure I guess. I don't have much experience with animals other than dragons so I wouldn't know." We sat down across the table from each other. "Don't you have birds where you're from?" I asked.

"No. We have dragons, dragons, and more dragons."

"Sounds like you guys have more trouble with dragons than we do" I joked

The smile dropped from his and he took on a more somber look. He whispered mournfully "Not so much anymore" I decided to let the subject drop. Whatever I came across seemed to be a delicate subject for him. Since it was time for breakfast some of the servants brought us some food to eat. They even brought a basket of fish for Toothless. I talked to Hiccup about DunBroch. Making sure to tell him how DunBroch really was and not how he had experienced thanks to the

people.

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

When we finished our meals I heard a roar from the outside. Merida and I ran from the room and out into the courtyard. There were dragons here, my dragons. They were surrounded by the guards just like I was yesterday. We noticed that Lord Macintosh and his men had their arms out ready to charge Stormfly. Merida ran up to Lord Macintosh and stopped them, saying that these dragons were also mine. I heard from him "Bloody hell lass. Is there any dragons here we can kill?"

She countered "From what I heard you have more burns than kills"

I whistled loudly to get everyone's attention. Once my dragons noticed me, they immediately disregarded the Highlanders and ran up to me. After getting licked more times than I could count, I noticed not everyone was here. "Where's Sprout?" I asked. Out of nowhere I heard a loud ***THUNK*** and a screech. I looked around and I saw an upside down wash tub moving around erratically. I whistled again and the tub moved quickly towards me. Once it was near me I held my foot out so that it wouldn't bump into me. I lifted it off the ground to reveal Sprout. He then nudged my leg affectionately. That's everyone now. How on earth did he get under the tub though?

"Why are you guys here?" I asked.

Meatlug walked towards me and turned to her side. There was a black arrow sticking out of her left hind leg. I remembered what I said to them. _ If you come across anyone, just get out of here and find a safe place. _ I guess being with me was their safe place. I bent down and grasped the arrow. "This might hurt a bit" I said to her. I took out the arrow and she gave a grunt of pain. I started to treat the wound with the supplies I kept in packs with Stormfly just as Merida ran up to me.

"Hiccup what's going on? I thought they were going to wait for you." she stated. I held up the bloodied arrow for her to see. She stammered "I swear the guards didn'tâ€|"

I said "None of you guys shot at them, I know. The make of the arrow doesn't match with any of the arrows here." I know that because I got a good look at them yesterday. I finished wrapping the bandage and stood up. "Well they're probably hungry" I turned to Merida "Mind showing me to the forge. I need to get Toothless' tail in order so I can take them fishing. I doubt your stock of fish is enough for six dragons."

"It's right this way." She led me to the forge while the dragons followed. It wasn't what I was expecting that's for sure. The forge was built just how the one on Berk used to be. The building was in top shape, everything was neatly organized. Looks like whoever works here was as organized as Gobber was. I remembered the last memory I had of him; the smell of his burnedâ€|.no! I pushed away the memories of Gobber and focused on what needed to be done. The fires of the forge were dead.

"I thought the Royal forge would be active" I stated.

"Our blacksmith's village was attacked by dragons not too long ago. He went home to help with repairing the village. We haven't found a replacement yet."

"It can't be helped. Lucky for us I was trained by a blacksmith" I stated. I began work on lighting the forge. I got everything in working order. I went outside and removed some of my tools from Meatlug's pack. I could have used the tools in the forge but I would consider that to be trespassing. After all they weren't mine; I have no right to use them. I saw at Merida looking at Stormfly. She's a brave one that's for sure. Went looking for a dragon rider and dealt with all those men in the courtyard. She's good. Merida turned to me "Well if you need me I'll be at the archery range practicing with my new bow. Talk to you later Hiccup"

"See you later Merida"

When she was gone I went to work on the new tail. There were enough materials around for me to make a 100 tails if I wanted to. I worked steadily making sure everything was how it was it needed to be. I had just finished making repairs to the saddle, tail and my foot. I exited the forge and replaced the old parts with the new ones. When I was finished I felt someone behind me.

"Hello Hiccup" I turned to see Queen Eleanor standing before me. "Queen Eleanor. What brings you here?" I inquired. She stated "You do. You might not know this but as a Queen I have access to a very large library that has documents on nations, people, and islands. Thanks to the documents on Berk I found something interesting."

Getting annoyed I asked "What are you getting at?"

"Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the third is the name of a dead boy. Here you are claiming to be someone who has passed on. So I want to know why you are using his name." she said.

I stated "That name belongs to no one but me." She raised her eyebrow at me. I asked as I mounted Toothless. "Do you know the origin of the name Hiccup in Viking culture?"

"I do" she said

I finished "Then you know that it is a name given to those who would not be missed. Given by those who could care less if they were alive or dead. As for whom I am, I never lied to any of you. That is my name. As for me being deadâ€¦well, being a ghost has its advantages." I took off into the sky with Toothless and the others. Leaving her to contemplate what I just told her.

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6

****Merida pov****

Of all the things I had to do, I had stay in the study and catch up

on my lessons. After I had a little archery practice mum came and told me to go study to catch up on what I missed from yesterday. It's not like the books would have gotten up and walked away. I could have studied after the talk with the three lords but oh no I had to stay here and read about the geography of DunBroch. I know the land like the back of my hand. Why do I need to do this?

I laid the book down and thought about the lords. Would they really go for what Hiccup suggested? I mean sure it's a little scary but it needs to be done. After all what better to defend DunBroch against dragons thanâ€¦|.

Dragon Riders

When we were talking to Hiccup he said that it would greatly benefit DunBroch in more ways than one. Initially they were against it but when he talked about other people that were fighting against dragons it was a long war. Dragons have only been with us for less than a year. For others the war has lasted generations. This could stop this conflict here and now. Stop us from losing anything more. Once they heard about the Vikings they agreed to talk to the lords about it. The sun has set, how long will it take them?

The door burst open and my parents walked through it. I asked "How'd it go?" Da answered after he took a swig from his mug "It was a well-rounded nay to the suggestion. They will not volunteer any of their clansmen for this. They said and I quote 'this is the craziest idea this side of the DunBroch'"

Mum stated "We can't blame them. They've lost a lot more than we have to the beasts. They've lost family, food, homes, and livestock. It's only natural that they would be reluctant."

I stated "Well even if they disagreed, I still volunteered. I'll become a dragon rider for DunBroch." Once I heard that he could train others to train dragons I wanted to be a part of it. I didn't like what happened to me. I never wanted to be caught off guard with a dragon ever again. Also with that knowledge I could save others like he saved me.

Mum countered "Merida even if you did this it would not look good on us. I'm still against it by the way." I huffed at her. Da continued "Aye she's right lass. Besides we'd need more than one inexperienced dragon rider to stop all this. Even if we could get four of them, we'd have a better chance." I sighed they were right. I would be ignoring the three lords and that would lead to trouble. Doesn't mean I can't have him teach me in secret though.

Then I heard "RAID!" It came from the window. We all looked at each other and then went to the window to see what was going on. There was a man on a horse screaming about a Dragon raid in a nearby village. The door burst open. It was Lord Macintosh "Did you hear? There's a dragon raid going on. You coming, or are you going to send that dragon rider to deal with them?"

Da responded "Aye, I coming"

Da left the room with Macintosh. From the window we could see the men leaving the castle and head towards the village to slay the dragons. Normally this wouldn't bother me, but my entire perspective on them

had begun to change because of Hiccup. I turned to mum and she murmured "Can we really trust him? ***SIGH*** I suppose we have no choice" Mum turned to me "Merida do you trust this Hiccup to be able to deal with the dragons?"

"Sure, I guess"

"You need to do more than guess, Merida. Right now you have an opportunity to prove to the lords that the rider is effective"

"You mean send Hiccup to deal with them." I stated. She nodded. "If you believe that he can deal with the dragons, then go get Hiccup." I nodded at her and ran from the room. Hiccup returned from fishing long ago. From the sounds of it he is at the forge working on things. I just need to tell him what is going on and send him on his way.

* * *

><p>Fergus pov

Why did they have to build the village so far away? I need to keep more horses at the castle. Maybe I'm getting a bit old for this. All this was going through my mind as we marched onto the village. We were just about to go into the village when I heard a roar from behind us. We stopped and I turned to see Hiccup with his dragon, Toothless. He landed in front of us; I noticed that he had on a strange cloak. Made up of some kind of weed I didn't recognize.

I asked "Merida?"

"Merida" He confirmed.

Dingwall stepped forward "What are you doing here?"

"I'm here to prevent causalities" he retorted

"Nay that's what we're here for, boy" Macintosh countered

"Really, because it seems you're here to kill dragons not to save anyone" He turned to me "King Fergus if you focus your men on saving the villagers, I can deal with the dragons." Though I was reluctant I nodded in agreement with him and he flew off into town.

Macintosh asked "You're not really going to listen to him, are you?"

"Focus on the villagers, get them out safely. That's our first priority." I ordered

We marched into the village and immediately got to work on getting the people out of it. The hardest part was getting the lads to ignore the dragons and focus on everyone else. Luckily whenever a dragon was bothering us Hiccup would swoop in and the dragon would fly off with him. The dragons acted differently around Hiccup. I saw dragons with someone or livestock within killing distance. Then Hiccup would come along, get in between them, wave around that flaming sword of his and they would follow him. It was as if they found him irresistible.

When we got out of the village with the people I asked "Did we get

everyone out?"

McGuffin answered "Every man, woman, and child"

"And the livestock" Dingwall said while holding up a chicken

We heard a great roar from the village. Hiccup and Toothless took off into the sky. When he was high above the village the dragons that attacked the village followed him upwards. It was like a flock of birds preparing for a migration. He flew away from the village and the dragons followed him. Off to god knows where. No one could say anything. No one and I mean no one has seen something like this.

Young Macintosh stated "King Fergus, you said that he was willing to train those who were willing to be like him"

"Aye, he was willing to" I said.

"Then I volunteer to be a Dragon Rider." He said

Macintosh exclaimed "What?! You can't! I forbidâ€|"

Young McGuffin said in a heavy Doric accent "I too volunteer"

Wee Dingwall stated "Well I can't let you lot have all the fun. I'm in."

Their fathers tried to convince them otherwise. I interrupted them "Shut it you lot! Though they are your sons they are also grown men. If they wish to become Dragon Riders, then we have no right to stop them." Their response was to grumble but they seem to have gotten off their backs about it. Now we have the support of all of the clans. Well the next in line anyway, close enough. I looked around and it didn't seem like anyone else wanted to volunteer. Ah well the first born of the clans will have to do.

Dingwall muttered "Madness. This is madness"

"Ha! Madness?! Name one thing that we ever did that was rational Dingwall" Lacking an answer we let the subject drop. Once we were sure the dragons weren't coming back we returned to the village. We all focused on sorting out the village (calming the villagers, getting the animals back into their pens and so on). Fortunately damage was minimal. Sure there were a few houses on fire but I've seen worse. Looks like dragon riders may be just what we need after all.

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

I walked through the castle halls with Toothless. It was late in the evening and everyone should be asleep. I still can't believe it worked. That idea I came up with before coming to DunBroch, the Lure Cloak. With the materials in the forge I was finally able to complete it. The cloak was infused with Dragon Nip and fish oil. It smelled awful but to a dragon it was irresistible. The nip allowed them to forget about the people and the fish got them to follow me. Fortunately I worked on Toothless craving for Dragon Nip over the

years and it doesn't affect him much. Otherwise I wouldn't have gotten off the ground. Sure I used my sword to get their attention, but it was mostly the cloak.

After I flew the dragons out of the village, I took them to a nearby lake I found when I first got here. Basically I took them fishing. I spent most of my time there making sure they all got their share. Maybe Now that they know about this lake they will ignore the villages entirely. There is a lot of fish there. A flock of dragons twice that size could fill their bellies there. The only down side was when I wasn't looking, the dragons shredded my cloak so it I couldn't use it again.

I walked to my room. Just as I put my hand on the door handle I heard Merida calling out to me from the other end of the hall. I hung my head; all I wanted to do was sleep. She ran up to me and I had to admit she seemed excited for some reason. "Did you hear the good news?" she asked

"No, I have not. I just got back, but please keep me from going to sleep while you talk."

"Well alright sleepy head, go get your sleep. I will go organize the volunteers."

"Wait, volunteers?" I asked more awake now than I was before.

"Yeah, you have volunteers. Congratulations! You'll be teaching the first class on Dragon Training DunBroch has ever seen" While Merida was all happy and proud about all this, I was dumbfounded. I really, really doubted they would go for it. Sure I suggested it to stop what happened to Vikings for generations from happening to them. I still didn't see them accepting any time soon.

"In total we have four trainees, the first born of all the lords and me." Merida announced proudly

"I didn't expect that many"

"Why?" she asked.

"Well you know dragons and I'm a Viking. I didn't expect anyone to volunteer." She looked at me strangely "What? No. There's no way you're a Viking" Guess I forgot to mention that little detail. Looks like Eleanor didn't tell her either. I thought she would be screaming it from the rooftops. Did she tell anyone? I gave her a serious look. "Yes way I'm a Viking"

"Who else knows about this?"

"As far as I know, you and your mother" I answered

"How'd she know?"

"Apparently she's fond of the library" I said. It looked like I confused her for a moment, until I look of realization spread across her face. She sighed "This is crazy"

"No, crazy is agreeing to dragon training" I pointed out

"Crazy that you're a Viking, I mean we have a long history with you guys. Half the people in the castle will want you dead"

"As if they didn't already" I said jokingly

"We have had a short time with dragons, Vikings more so. There's a lot of hate there"

"Do you hate me then?" I asked. She paused for a long moment. She sighed. "No. You saved my life and you're willing to help my people. I don't hate you. To be honest you're the last person I would suspect of being a Viking."

"Thanks" I said sarcastically

"Well, when will lessons start?" she asked

"Give me a couple days. I didn't really expect this to happen"

"Alright I'll tell the others in the morning. Night"

I mumbled good night to her and entered my room. I didn't bother with removing my armor; instead I laid down into bed. Well I fell into it technically. Rather than sleeping on the floor like Toothless did before he joined me, by resting his head on me. It was really heavy. I tried to get him off me but he wasn't moving. So I just laid back and let sleep take me.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter 7

****Hiccup pov****

I looked around me and I wasn't anywhere on DunBroch. I was on Berk. It was just how I remembered it people going about on the port. Talking and going about their duties in town. As I walked by I was greeted warmly by people. It was just like it was during my days of dragon training, the days when people actually liked me. I came across Astrid. She pulled me over to the side and asked me "So how are you going to tell everyone?"

"What?"

"You do remember that you have to kill a dragon today. You said you would think of something last night"

"Right um, I'll get right on that." I walked away from her and I saw something in the distance. A red glow. The glow got brighter and closer, until I could see it clearly. It was fire. Dragon fire. When the fires reached Berk I was blinded by the heat and light. When I opened my eyes, Berk was destroyed.

The village was a wreck; it was like looking at a forest after a forest fire. The ground was black with soot and the people—the people. Everywhere I looked there were people. Men, women, and children. Their flesh burned and blackened. Dead, they were all dead.

I was a blacksmiths apprentice for a tribe that loved weapons. I knew everyone on Berk, every last one of them.

They couldn't all be gone. I ran. I tried to find someone, anyone. Heck, I would've taken Snotlout. I ran to the last place I saw Astrid. I saw her; she was on the ground leaned up against a wall. I knelt before her. Her body was covered in burns. Half of her face was blackened by the flames. Her eyes were closed, as if she was asleep. I whispered "Astrid, what happened?"

Her eyes opened sharply "You killed me"

With a sharp yelp I backed away from her. I stood there horrified as Astrid picked herself off the ground and looked at me with more hate than I have ever seen before. I looked all around, everyone who was dead stood up. Then they walked towards me. They all chanted the same thing. "You killed me"

"Hey guys wait a moment. Let's not be hasty here" I was punched in the stomach. It hurt so much it brought me to my knees. I looked up at the perpetrator and it was Snotlout. "Shut it Useless" He said. Someone grabbed my right arm. I turned and it was Fishlegs. Snotlout grabbed my other arm and pulled me up. Then Tuffnut grabbed my legs and threw them over his shoulder. With me like that, all of us walked to the kill ring. Everyone surrounded the ring and their chant changed to "Throw him in!"

"Come on you guys. Is this really necessary?" I stuttered. They dropped me on the ground and walked away from me. Then I saw Gobber, he stood over me. "Gobber! Boy am I glad to see you" I told him. Gobber snarled "Traitor" at me. He picked me up and threw me into the center of the kill ring. I hit the stone floor, hard. I've definitely had better landings. Just as I was about to pick myself up, someone stepped on my back to keep me down. I looked to see Astrid attached to the foot. She looked to the crowd and from it strode out Ruffnut. She threw her spear to Astrid, which she caught by the way. She lifted the spear upwards and brought it down. I felt the spear go through my leg. I screamed in agony. She pinned me to the ground with that spear. I couldn't move.

She took her boot off my back and walked away. I asked "Why? Why did you do that?" As she walked away from me she stated darkly "You know why" Then I heard the doors to the Monstrous Nightmare burst open in front of me. From the shadows walked out dad. Man did he look mad. He stood before me with his hammer in his hand.

"Dad I can explain." I began

He retorted "There is nothing to explain. YOU KILLED US! YOU BROUGHT IT HERE! YOU BROUGHT THE RED DEATH TO BERK!" The villagers loudly agreed. "No, wait it wasn't like that" I said

"You killed us." He said darkly. With hammer in hand, he raised it above his head.

I pleaded "Please Dad"

"You are no son of mine" he finished and brought his hammer down upon me.

* * *

><p>I awoke. I took in hard, short breaths. My grey tunic was drenched in sweat. It happened again. That dream, that nightmare. Ever since that day, that nightmare made me remember how Berk was like before I left it. That nightmare always made me wake up in the middle of the night. When I looked out though it seemed the first rays of sunlight were peeking over the horizon.<p>

I turned to see Toothless looking at me concerned. He purred worriedly at me. I told him "Sorry for waking you bud. Go back to sleep" He rested his head on my lap and looked at me sadly. "Yeah it was the nightmare again" It had been a long time since I've had it. I hoped to never have it again.

"Don't worry Toothless. I'll be ok. Get some more sleep, we got a big day ahead of us" Toothless moaned and rested his head back on the ground. I got out of the bed and left the room. As I walked through the halls I saw servants (yawning I might add) going about their business. Then I came across an entryway. If I remember correctly Merida said it led to their tower. So I went up the steps and I was at the top of the tower. The morning air was refreshing. This spot deserved the phrase 'I can see my house from here'. I could see quite a bit from up here. Not as much as I would have been if I was on Toothless but I'll take it. I leaned against the stone edge and looked around.

I sighed and spoke "Why did those nightmares come back?"

"Why am I alive? That's the question you are actually wondering about."

I jumped at the sound of the voice. Seeing no one I walked around the top and came across someone. It was Queen Eleanor. She sat on the roof of the tower looking over her kingdom. I didn't notice her before because she was in the darkness on the opposite side of the door.

"You know it is customary to bow to the queen" she remarked. "No queens where I'm from" I countered. I only bowed to her in the first place for a good first impression. She chuckled "Fair enough" She stood up and faced me. "I sometimes come up here. It puts things in perspective."

"That no matter how big things seem to be, they are in fact small in the grand scheme of things."

She stated "You're quite wise for your age Hiccup"

"Not really. I just rode on Toothless a lot" I said

She smiled "As I was saying what you are feeling is called survivors guilt. It's common enough for those whom have survived tragedies. Back in the day after the invasions many men and women felt it, it was dark times. Vikings were one of the invaders" _Speaking of Vikings _I thought. "Why have you not told anyone I'm a Viking?" I asked. This question has been bothering me for the past couple of days.

She answered "I'm a Queen Hiccup. If protecting my kingdom means I

have to hire one such as you then so be it." She stated. I nodded in understanding. It's why she let me stay here, but there was another reason. In my old life I heard the tales of the moreâ€¦...savage Vikings attacking DunBroch. If any Highlanders find out, I'm dead. She added "Plus you seem about as dangerous as a fly is to a bear." Thanks, I really appreciate that one.

"Well everyone should be waking up soon. I better get down and put things in order" she said. She walked over to the staircase. "I look forward to hearing about your training session this afternoon" she said as she descended down the steps into the castle. That's right, today is the day I would begin their training. My days with Gobber allowed me to see that this wouldn't be some day spent inside looking over documents reading about it. This required practical training. Gobber always said "I believe in learning on the job"

I began to walk to the door and out popped the triplets. They waved at me and I waved back. Then Sprout flew out and above the brothers. "What are you doing up here?" I asked him. Sprout then landed beside them and the brothers petted him affectionately. "So you four are getting along well I see" They nodded and then Hamish waved a stick above his head at me. He then threw the stick over the edge of the tower. The brothers then giggled to themselves and went back down with Sprout, closing the door behind them. Okay, that was weird. What was up with the stick though? Then my eyes widened in realization. The doors were propped open with a stick. The very stick they threw over. I ran over to the doors and tried to open them, but they were shut tight. I was locked out. Oh Odin, I hope someone comes soon.

8. Chapter 8

****My apologies for taking so long to update. For the last few weeks I had to deal with matters that required my attention and time. Well that and i only got my internet set up in my new place today. Just so everyone knows I am not to to stick to a schedule, since i have other things on my mind, but i will keep updating this story. If i do drop it i will say so.****

****Again sorry for taking so long.****

*** * ***

><p>Chapter 8<p>

****Hiccup pov****

I was stuck up in that tower by myself for an hour. I wondered if Eleanor had the triplets lock me up here since she was worried about Merida. Luckily for me, Maudie came around the top of the tower (with another stick), it seemed birds sometimes nest up here and it is her duty to deal with them. After she asked how I locked myself out, I simply replied with "The triplets". She nodded in understanding at me. Apparently I wasn't the only target for their antics. She was still a little nervous around me but at least we seem to have a common enemy.

When I got back into the castle I went around looking for those four. After a few encounters I found out there were a variety of small

passages throughout the castle. I decided to get them later since I have a class to prepare for. I have to get Sprout away from them; they could be a bad influence on him.

I donned my black armor and roused Toothless and the others. Yesterday Fergus told me that I could use the field near the castle for the lessons, since there wasn't anything of importance going on. He said something about that they used it for an archery contest a few years ago. I came across Merida and asked her to get the others. With Merida dealing with the others I gathered my dragons out in the field for training. For the training session I had Hookfang, Stormfly, and Barf/Belch. It was best that Meatlug rested for a while till her leg healed. I wasn't being protective, just thorough. I probably would have had Sprout here too butâ€¦.well I already know why he's not here.

After a while my students came and were ready for the lessons, without weapons. I told Merida that they were not allowed to bring any weapons, not even a dagger. Dragons like people are naturally skittish when someone one a sword at them. What I had planned for training was a few things I learned that helped me with my dragon training on Berk. Meaning, I made sure to bring four pouches of a certain plant for training.

"Alright let's begin dragon training" I stated

"Why train them when you can just kill them?" I heard

I looked over to the side to see the three lords approach us. It was Lord Dingwall that voiced his question. Though their sons agreed with the training, their clansmen decided to stay on for a while until they seen what they can do. You don't buy an axe till you're sure it can behead someone I guess. I replied "Lord Dingwall the reason we are training and not killing is because this is more of a long term solution then the other way. Besides any idiot can kill a dragon"

Lord Macintosh laughed "Ha! Unlikely, it takes skilled warriors to take down a dragon"

I replied "If they don't know what they are doing. Merida, mind giving me a hand"

"Sure" Merida replied. She walked over to me and Stormfly. "What do you want me to do?" she asked.

"Scratch Stormfly right here" I pointed to section behind Stormfly's horns. "What?" she asked

I sighed "Just scratch her"

She complied and began to scratch Stormfly where he pointed to. Stormfly was enjoying it, I could tell. She always had a weakness for scratching. Now for the finishing touch. I told her to scratch her chin. Once she did that, Stormfly collapsed. The onlookers (including Merida) were shocked. MacGuffin walked forward and lifted up Stormfly's head. No reaction of course. The scratching is effective on dragons.

Macintosh said "It'sâ€¦."

"Incapacitated yes, but alive" I finished. "It's a little something I came across when training Toothless. A little scratch and you have one downed dragon. More effective than a sword don't you think." They nodded in agreement. I turned to the lords. "Is there anything else you would like to say?" They mumbled their pardons and left the field. When they were gone Merida asked "What else is there?"

"Well since MacGuffin stepped forward it seems we have a volunteer" I answered. MacGuffin dropped Stormfly's head and turned to me. I removed one of the pouches from my belt and threw it to MacGuffin. After he caught it he removed one of the pieces of Dragon Nip from it. These four pouches of Dragon Nip were all I had left after the Lure Cloak. Good thing I gathered so much before I came here. He looked at me questioningly.

I stated "What MacGuffin is holding is called Dragon Nip. A plant that is native to the Viking Archipelago. It is very useful against dragons. For example" I turned to Hookfang and ordered "Get him" Hookfang roared and charged MacGuffin. This made MacGuffin so nervous he dropped the bag. I was surprised that he did not run but instead held his ground. Well, he held the piece of Dragon Nip in his outstretched hand and closed his eyes, DÃ©jÃ vu anyone.

Before our eyes Hookfang skidded to a stop in front of him and sniffed his hand. MacGuffin opened his eyes and looked at him. He then moved his hand around and Hookfang followed him with his head. Hookfang then rolled over onto his back in submission. After that, MacGuffin picked up the pouch and looked at it wondrously. I grabbed the rest of the pouches and threw one to Merida, Macintosh, and Dingwall. Though I would be there for the remainder of today's training, this was a safety net in case there were anyâ€|violent encounters for the next part.

Dingwall asked "How come we haven't heard about this from the traders?"

"The traders don't know about it. Neither do the Vikings. Besides me, you guys are the only one to know about this." They seemed pleased with that last bit I added.

"Well now that I've armed you with what you need, we'll continue on to the experience portion of the lesson" They gave me questioning looks. I sighed "I believe in learning on the job. If you expect to learn how to train dragons, then what better way than going out into the field to do so?"

"Wait, do you mean we'll go get our own dragon?" Merida asked excitedly. To be honest letting them ride on Stormfly or the others crossed my mind, but I simply couldn't. They've come to mean a lot to me over the years. So I decided to take them over to the lake with the dragons for their training. I've kept an eye on the lake for the past couple of days fortunately. They're still there, fishing.

"Yep, now get on. It's a long journey." I stated

Dingwall stuttered "You meanâ€|ride the dragons?"

"No, we're going to skip down to the lake. Yes, ride them! Or would you prefer you're carried by their talons" I said. They all shook

their heads at me. So they each mounted a dragon. Macintosh got on Stormfly. Dingwall got on Barf/Belch. MacGuffin got on Hookfang. Since I wanted Meatlug to rest so that her leg would heal, Merida will ride with me. I made sure they each grasped onto the straps of the pack so that they wouldn't fall off.

"Well then let's go" I said.

We all took off into the sky. I could never get enough of this. The rush of air, the exhilaration, it was great. The others on the other hand were gripping onto their mounts tightly. Guess being a few hundred feet off the ground made them a little nervous. Though Merida kept a firm grip on me, she was laughing with delight. Looks like she might be built for this.

9. Chapter 9

Chapter 9

****Hiccup pov****

It took us a while but we finally passed over the forest near the lake. Even from this distance I could see the lake. It seemed that there were more dragons today then there was when I last visited. Even the number of different species increased. The number of species here was as diverse as the Viking Archipelago.

When we landed away from the lake, the guys got off of the dragons and they looked thankful to be back on solid ground. Merida on the other hand seemed disappointed that it ended. We all stood away from the dragons but my students still seemed a little nervous. Macintosh inquired "So you showed us how to take down a dragon. How do we train them?"

"Simple" I said. I walked away from them and approached a Gronckle. The Gronckle noticed me and gave a slight growl. I held my hand out and the growling stopped. The Gronckle then walked up to me and pressed his snout to my hand.

I told them "This is what you need to do. What this is basically is the equivalent of a hand shake. It shows the dragon that you mean it no harm and that you are willing to show trust" I petted the dragon for a moment and it flew away.

"Alright I showed you everything you need to know, the rest is up to you". They all nodded at me and went over to the dragons. It was a bit of a rough start, even though they were spread out a bit many of the dragons flew away from them. Or disregarded them and went back to fishing. Oh well, with this many dragons they're bound to find at least one dragon they can train.

* * *

><p>Merida pov

Hiccup made this seem like it was going to be easy. Any of the dragons that I came across were too busy stuffing their faces to notice me. After walking among them for a while, I decided to go stand by the edge of the forest. I stood outside of their little

gathering so that I wouldn't get stepped on. I watched as all the dragons flew around catching fish for themselves. It made me wonder if having dragons work for the fishermen would be beneficial. I heard something behind me and turned to see what it was.

Between the trees I could see something lingering there. I could barely see it; it blended in with the shadows too well. The minute I began to approach it, it disappeared further into the woods. Well I don't need a wisp to tell me to go after it. So I left the others and pursued what I saw into the woods. Once in a while I caught a glimpse of it, but I mostly followed its tracks. Luckily the woods were too thick for it to fly away.

After chasing after it for a while I came across a stream that led to the lake. I stood beside it to catch my breath. Then I heard it, a splashing, a bit upstream. I crept upstream a little bit and hid myself behind a large rock. I looked over the top of it and I saw it. A dragon at the edge of the stream.

A Night Fury

Physically it looked the same as Toothless but it was different. It was a bit smaller than Toothless, but judging by its muscles it was stronger than him. When I caught a glimpse of its face I could see that it had violet eyes. They shimmered in the light like amethysts. I was so captivated by it that I didn't notice what it was doing until now. It was fishing, but away from the lake. Over by the lake some of the dragons tried to steal the others fish. This one decided to fish away from them, clever.

It looked into the stream. Then it pounced into it and a fish flew out of the stream. The dragon chased after it and even went past my hiding spot. After it gave up on the fish it turned around and saw me. Neither of us moved for a minute. We just stared at each other. Then it's back arched up like a cat and it started to growl at me.

I stood up and faced it. I did as Hiccup instructed and held my hand out to it. The growling stopped surprisingly. It looked between my hand and my face, snorted, then walked past me. It ignored me. I dropped my hand and whispered "Well that didn't work". The dragon went back to fishing and I sat on top of the rock. As I watched it fish I realized something. It was terrible at fishing in a stream. Its technique was the equivalent of a child splashing in a puddle along the road. After watching it for a while the dragon simply gave up and laid down in the shade of the trees.

Then it came to me, the idea. I decided to go into the stream and fish for it. It's not as easy without my bow, but I'll make due. Once I caught a fish, I got out of the stream. I slowly approached the dragon. Once it noticed me it got up and looked at me curiously. I held out the fish and it slowly approached me. When it opened its mouth I noticed it didn't have teeth. "I guess not all Night Furies haveâ€|." Then its teeth came out and it gobbled up my fish. "Teeth" I finished. It had retractable teeth. Guess that's why Toothless is called Toothless.

It approached me and sniffed me. "I don't have any more you daft thing" I said. It looked at me slightly offended. Then its stomach loudly gurgled. "You're hungry huh." It huffed in response. "Guessing from how you fared before you have no idea how to fish in a stream.

Come on, I'll show you"

I led the two of us into the stream and I taught her how to fish. I showed her how to fish just like how I showed Mum when she was a bear. Fortunately the dragon caught on quick. By the end of things she caught over a dozen fish (yes it's a she, I checked). When she had her fill we waded out of the stream together. When we were on dry land again, I held out my hand. I hoped that she trusted me enough to do this.

She got up on her hind legs in front of me. As I looked up to her I looked into her eyes, she looked back into mine. Neither of us moved. I felt that this was very important moment. When I felt that this was going nowhere, I hung my head in defeat. When I was just about to walk away, she pressed her snout against my hand. My heart skipped a beat after that. I could feel her cool scales against my hand. I've been around Toothless and the others before but thisâ€¦this was amazing! A week ago I would have tried to kill her. Nowâ€¦.. I feel as though I'm complete with her.

"Merida! Where are you?" I heard. It was Hiccup. He must have noticed I was gone and decided to look for me. I called out "I'm over here!" I heard footsteps come through the woods before me. As he walked into the clearing he said "I wondered where youâ€¦went" he finished in a shocked whisper. He stood there mouth agape and I stated "Not bad for a first time don't you think?"

Hiccup didn't say anything. With wide eyes he focused on the dragon. He approached us. My new dragon went back on her four legs and held her head up high. When he was right before us he held his hand out just like I did and she pressed her snout against his palm. What theâ€¦I go to all that work and he does it just like that?!

I eased her into this for him. Yes that must be it.

"A Night Fury" He laughed in delight as he petted her "I thought they were all gone". He turned to me "Congratulations Merida. You trained your first dragon." I felt pretty good after he said. Now I'm ready to properly protect DunBroch.

"So what are you going to name her?" Hiccup asked after he removed his hand from her.

I was at a lost "I don't know." She looked at me with an offended look in her eyes.

Hiccup smiled "Take your time. There's no rush"

We went back to the lake and it seems the boys are still low on luck. "Their methods could use some practice" I remarked. Hiccup said. "No kidding. Without the Dragon Nip they probably would have gotten hurt" We walked over to the trees that Toothless and his other dragons were lying under. "Hey bud, look who we have here" Hiccup said. Toothless looked over to us and once he saw my Night Fury, his eyes snapped open. He jumped up immediately and rushed to her. They bounded around each other looking over one another. They seemed excited to see each other for some reason.

Hiccup remarked "Interesting, so this is what happens when two Night Furies get together."

I asked "What do you mean?"

He said "Merida, Night Furies are the rarest species I know of. In my travels I have never come across another one, until now."

"Never?" I asked. He shook his head in response. I turned back to our dragons and watched them interact with each other. It sounded rather lonely, to never see another of your species for the longest time. When they calmed down a bit from their initial reaction and they returned to our sides.

We all then sat down under the shade of the trees and watched the boys try to get their own dragon. Though after sometime (and some burns), they each got their own dragon. They were species I did not recognize but thankfully Hiccup did. Probably because of that Book of Dragons he keeps on Toothless. I have to get another look at that book sometime.

Anyway Macintosh trained a Skrill, a dragon that could fire lightning instead of flames. When Macintosh presented him to us he gave him a hearty pat. Guess it didn't like that because he gave a big shock. It made his hair stand on end and you could still see the static that bounced around the ends of his hairs. It was quite the sight to see. The Skrill was named Stormbolt.

MacGuffin trained a Timberjack. A dragon with razor sharp wings that is capable of slicing through trees. Its ability was demonstrated on one of the nearby trees. With a swipe of its wing, the Timberjack felled the small tree. MacGuffin then caught the tree with ease and threw it a fair distance away. The MacGuffin Clan loved their caber tosses, with that dragon they would be swimming in them. The dragon rightfully received the name Caber.

Finally Dingwall trained a Snaptrapper. When the dragon opened its mouths all the way all I could smell was the sweet smell of chocolate. The very smell made my stomach gurgle. Hiccup said that this particular species used that smell to attract prey. It wasn't called a trapper for nothing. It also apparently uses a horrid smell to scare away predators. Unfortunately, we only learned about that after the trapper got spooked by a nearby dragon. The Snaptrapper was called him Snaps.

Hiccup then withdrew some rope from one of his packs for us so that we could hang on in flight. We all then mounted our dragons. Hiccup continued his lessons on how to properly ride our dragons before we set off. Once he was finished we all flew off. It was a bit of a rough start but we are all flying alongside each other now.

Riding on Toothless with Hiccup was exhilarating, but to ride on your own was something else. I looked around at the others and the boys seemed to actually be enjoying themselves this time around. With Hiccup leading us, we travelled to back home and all along the way I strained my mind to figure out a name for my new pet.

10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10

****Merida pov****

I woke up today just after the sunrise. I was too excited to keep sleeping. I quickly got dressed and made my way down to the kitchen to get something to eat. Yesterday when we returned to the castle, we showed off our dragons to everyone. When the three lords saw us their jaws were on the ground. They thought we couldn't do it. When mum and Da saw, it was a mixed reaction. Da was clearly proud of me for my accomplishment. Mum on the other hand smiled, but I could tell she was worried about me.

After we all had supper together, we inquired about tomorrow's lessons. Hiccup told us that today we would spend some time learning about our dragons. Basically we were to strengthen the relationship between us. Like some of the training sessions the guards do together. Hiccup on the other hand was going to work on some things that we would need for our training at the smithies. Well, we still didn't have our blacksmith yet so he could leave the task to him. Fortunately, I heard that they were almost finished with the repairs on the village.

Once I grabbed an apple from the kitchen I went to the stables. Before our lessons Hiccup got some of the servants to prepare the stables for our new pets. Since we didn't have many horses (Angus was all that's left, since some dragons ate them long before Hiccup) there was room for Hiccup's dragons and our own. I made sure that Angus and my dragon would be beside each other for convenience sake. Luckily, Angus was already used to Toothless and the others so having a few more dragons didn't affect him.

I retrieved my dragon from the stables, which took longer than I would have thought (I picked the only dragon that wasn't a morning person). Once I roused her I spent most of the morning with her. To be honest she was the most bull headed animal I ever came across. Set in her own way she was. Other than that I didn't learn much to be honest. Well I learned how much fish she could eat (it was quite a number of them trust me). We'll need to restore our supply tomorrow.

Still I find it hard to imagine how different your life could be in just a day. Before I would have gladly hunted a dragon, now things change. Convincing those hunters to change wasn't easy. Before the official start of dragon training I spent my days making sure that unless it was absolutely necessary people were not supposed to hunt dragons.

I had to talk with them since that black arrow is a trademark among certain hunters. After what happened to Meatlug I wanted to make sure it wouldn't happen again (no one came forward to say who shot her). Last thing we need is Hiccup to leave in the middle of training because of hunters. Even worse would be if Hiccup found out one of them shot his dragon. I shudder to think what he would do to the poor guy.

Around noon I went to the archery range with her so that I could practice. Practicing helps me think and being the only trainer with a nameless dragon means I need to think of a good name fast. I started saying names out loud, to see how they sounded. What surprised me the most was that she was reacting to the names; well she was shaking her head at them.

"Darksnout? Stormhook? Bludgeoner? Nightingale?" She shook her head at each name like she had the others that I had said. Then she yawned at me "Well then how about big mouth?" She narrowed her eyes at me.

"Nice to see you two are getting along"

I turned to see Hiccup walking up to us with Toothless. He was carrying something with him. I couldn't tell what it was since it was wrapped up. "Yeah, getting along" I said sarcastically as I sheathed my bow.

"So why'd you come here? I figured you'd be busy" I inquired. He set what he carried on the ground and unfolded it. It was a saddle! It looked just like his, without the prosthetics that is. "I'm still working on the designs for the others, but luckily for you I already have a design." he stated. "Here, let's see how it fits" With Hiccup's help I put the saddle on her. Since I've saddled up Angus plenty of times this came easy to me. She was a little hesitant at first but when I was done it looked natural on her. I think it was even comfy to her.

"It fits" Hiccup stated.

"Thanks Hiccup" I said

"No problem. So how's the naming going?" he asked. I scoffed at him. I drew my bow and took aim at the targets "Terrible" I stated frustrated. Between each sentence I released an arrow at the targets "I can't think of anything decent. It's like mind is feeble or something. To top it off if I do come up with something decent she just shakes her head at me." On the last arrow I shot I missed the target entirely. I growled in frustration and drew another arrow. I must have pulled too hard on my bowstring because the wood splintered from the top of the bow to the center. Making it useless.

"Oh by the wisps!" I proclaimed in frustration. I threw the broken bow on the ground and tried to calm down. I turned to Hiccup who was looking at me with wide eyes. He said "Either you're hard on your bow or the wood used to make them is a lot more brittle here"

With a calmer voice I said "Our bowyer was attacked by a Gronckle a few weeks back. He got so hurt that Da let him stay home so that he could recover. Since he's gone, I have to get my bows from a nearby village. Sadly the guy who makes them is an amateur"

Hiccup turned to look at the targets. "Still you're a pretty good archer even with a poor quality bow"

I replied proudly "The best in the land"

"The last target says otherwise" he pointed out

I glared at him for a moment and then I heard a boom. I turned to the last target (the one I missed) had a hole; right through its center. Hiccup and I then turned to my dragon and she had a smug look on her face.

She was the one who did it.

"That was a dead on shot" I stated.

Hiccup smiled "Night Furies never miss"

I decided to test that. There was a target twice as far as that target was. I pointed to it "Think you can hit that one girl" She nodded and looked at the target. She narrowed her eyes and then shot fire. It reminded me of a flaming arrow flying through the air. I followed the shot all the way down the range. She hit it, another bull's eye.

I laughed "Amazing"

Hiccup commented "Looks like there's another one even further down" There was it was a target hanging from the lowest branch of a tree at the edge of the field. Even I had trouble hitting that one. I turned to her "Again?" Before she could respond Toothless jumped up beside her and chirped.

Hiccup asked "You want to try too, bud?" He chirped again and took aim at it. The shot flew through the air and he hit the target. It wasn't a dead on shot like any of hers but he still hit it. I smiled "Night Furies never miss huh?"

"Hey, he still hit the target" He responded.

I turned to her "Think you can do better girl?"

She chirped and took aim at the target. Then loosed another shot. She hit it dead on in the center again! Hiccup and Toothless were shocked at it. "She hit it" he whispered. I petted her affectionately. "Great shots girl!" I complemented. She purred happily. I turned to look at the last target again. The target was barely there. What little was left of the target was barely hanging from one of the ropes. Looks like the breath of Night Furies are no joke.

Hiccup said "Incredible"

I smiled at him. I saw that Toothless was pouting a little though. He sat on the ground with his back to us. When she noticed it she walked up to him and nudged him playfully. It didn't work at first but when she nudged him again they started to play with each other. It reminded me of kittens playing with each other.

"Well, he seems to have cheered up" I remarked.

"Yeah, these kinds of things have a habit of cheering him up" he turned to me. "Soâ€¦you guys up for a little extra training."

I smiled back "Definitely"

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

For the little training I decided to go flying. We set off immediately after her answer and flew over the woods of DunBroch. Sure I wanted to be sure the saddle fit alright with Merida and her dragon, but this was something I have never experienced till

DunBroch, flight with another Night Fury.

I've been flying beside Merida for a while now and I've seen them in action. For beginners they were actually not bad, granted they could still use a little work. Otherwise they seem to have a better proficiency with this than the other guys. I think it's time to take it up a notch.

I turned to Merida "You interested in a little race?"

"Ha, interested? I was born ready for this. Where are we racing to?"

I answered "From here to Dragon Lake" It was what the Highlanders were calling the lake where the dragons fished; it was just another lake to me.

"Alright! Let's show them show them what we got girl" Merida announced. She immediately picked up speed and got quite a bit away from us. I chuckled "Let's show them what a real rider is supposed to look like" Toothless roared and we flew after them.

Rather than going straight after them. We went forward while rising higher. I know how a Night Fury flies, not Merida. They specialize in dive bombing their targets, so we were aiming for the upper air currents. When we got high enough, the wind pushed us forward and increased our speed. Once we had enough, we dived forward. With this speed the ground zoomed upwards to meet us and once we were at Merida's level we evened out and flew after her. The gap between us and Merida close quickly and then widened, mainly because we passed her. Oh, she wasn't happy about that.

I called back to Merida "You're not bad Merida, but we're better"

I got the expected response from that taunt. They tried harder than before. It was a little disappointing though; both of them were trying to take control of the other. Their little struggle allowed us to gain quite a bit of distance. I sat straight up and looked around. Merida was way behind us now.

I said "Looks they have a bit more work to do." Toothless grunted in agreement. "Well looks like we won this race" After I said that a bolt of fire exploded off to our right. We were so shocked that we slowed down. Stupid decision really. I looked over my shoulder to see Merida and she passed us!

Her dragon fired off a bolt in order for us to lose our speed. Once we lost that they accelerated, caught up and passed us. Did Merida think that up, but in order for that to work they would have to be working together! I watched their movements they were in synch with each other. What in Odin's name happened back there?

Merida called back "Looks like we're winning Hiccup"

I smirked and called back to her "We'll see about that Princess"

* * *

><p>Our little race ended up in a tie. I was a little annoyed with

myself that I didn't notice her shot. During my five years alone, I was more aware of my surroundings. If I had noticed it we wouldn't have lost speed. Ha, maybe being with people again is softening me up a bit. No matter though, the training was successful, they've improved on that flight. We landed on a hill on the far side of Dragon Lake. Once we dismounted from our dragons, they laid down in the grass gratefully.<p>

I stated "I think our little race tired them out"

"Aww, poor little lambs" Merida replied while scratching her dragon's chin. We on the grass and leaned on our respective pets. Looking out over the lake we could see the dragons flying across it interacting with each other. Judging by the sun it was the middle of the afternoon. It was peaceful, just looking over the landscape and listening to the silence, till Merida broke it.

"Wildfire"

I asked "What?"

She petted her dragon "Wildfire. That's what I've decided to name her?"

I don't know why asked. It was a stupid question. "Why Wildfire?"

She replied "Hiccup, I'm obsessed with being wild and free. Being a Princess of a kingdom doesn't give you much chance of that. Even we get more freedom, there always more to be had. When I aim for that, I fly straight and true like an arrow or like Wildfire's shots. That kind of attitude can be dangerous, but it's who I am."

She petted her dragon "And I feel that's who she is as well. When we were up in the air racing against each other, I was so focused on winning that I forgot what I felt when I first rode her. The feeling of when the ground dropped from below me. The wind blowing past us, and when we were under the clouds I felt..."

"Free" I finished

"Yes, more than I could ever feel on Angus. When I could feel that everything else that happened today made sense to me. The way she been acting, why she did; everything. It made sense to me. We're one and the same, meaning that we're both stubborn as mules. Once we started to let go of our stubbornness weâ€¦."

"Worked together rather than trying to control the other" I stated, remembering my stupid cheat sheet when I first went flying and almost crashing into the rocks below.

She exclaimed "Yes! Once we did, I felt even freer. Like I was freely able to reach the heavens themselves or beat you in a race"

"Ah, no. Technically it was a tie." I pointed out

She shrugged "Details, details"

"You figured all that out in that little amount of time" I marveled "Meridaâ€¦..you are amazing"

She beamed "Thanks Hiccup, but don't sell yourself short. You're pretty amazing yourself. You and Toothless" She jumped up "Well it's getting near supper time, we better head back home."

I stated "You guys go on ahead; I want to check our prosthetics before we leave"

She mounted Wildfire "Alright, see you in the dining hall" With that said she shot off into the air and started her journey home. I smiled at Toothless "She called us amazing bud" Toothless purred contently. My smile dropped. "It's been a long time since I've heard thatâ€¦.and I don't even deserve it"

Toothless sat beside and purred concerned for me. I scratched the side of his face "It's alright bud there's no need to worry." I stood up and stretched. "Maybe it's time I forgot about the past. Forget the pain, the misery, and the nightmares. This placeâ€¦.it's a new start. We can begin our lives all over again" I mounted Toothless "Maybe that's for the best." We jumped into the air and flew after Merida.

Yeah, I think it's time I forgot about Berk and moved forward. Straight and true like an arrow.

11. Chapter 11

Chapter 11

****Hiccup pov****

It was the day after I had my little race with Merida. When we got home yesterday, I spent the rest of the day and some of the night focusing on the creation of the saddles for the guys. I was able to come up with some pretty good designs before bed. In the morning I completed them in time for lessons. To start off lessons for today, I gave them their saddles and fortunately they worked for them.

I decided to take them on their own lesson. Merida couldn't join us today. Queen Eleanor told me this morning that she had some lessons of her own to catch up on and wouldn't be finished till the afternoon. Though I was disappointed to not have her around today, we left to continue our lessons.

Like Merida, they had trouble working in union with their dragons. Fortunately, with a bit of work they were able to cooperate with each other (more or less). By the end of the lessons, I could safely say that they were better flyers. Not as good as Merida was, but better than they were before. By the time I wrapped up the lesson, it was the middle of the afternoon.

When we returned they put Stormbolt, Caber and Snaps in the stables. We were walking back to the castle, when Macintosh noticed some of the servants were unloading barrels from a cart and moving them into the kitchen. They were the younger female palace servants I should mention. The guys were only too happy to help them (and they seemed all too happy to let them). I rolled my eyes at them. When it comes to a couple of pretty girls, guys will do anything. The girls then went inside and helped the others with preparations with

supper.

While they set about their work, I leaned outside the doors and watched them. It was mostly barrels of fish since they needed to replenish their supply. I doubt it will last long with the way our dragons eat. Maybe feeding the dragons from the lake should be incorporated to their lessons. After Macintosh picked the first barrel, he commented "You know Hiccup; you could help us with this."

I smiled back "If I recall correctly, you all volunteered to help and they agreed to it. I never said I would help" They groaned at this and went back to work. Though Macintosh and Dingwall were having troubles lifting the barrels, MacGuffin lifted them without a problem.

Macintosh inquired while moving the barrels "So Hiccup, seen anything you like here in DunBroch? Seen _anyone_ you like?"

I smiled "Maybe someone." I looked towards Merida and Wildfire in the distance. Alright, I'll admit it. I liked Merida. I mean _really_ liked her. When I thought about her, it reminded me of how I thought of Astrid back on Berk. Merida was strong, courageous, determined, and incredible.

From here I could tell that her brothers and Sprout came up to play with Wildfire. Oddly enough, Wildfire seemed to enjoy their company. I can't understand that, their devils. For crying out loud, they practically corrupted Sprout. Gone was his meek behavior, he was basically one of the brothers now. Then I thought back to how Snotlout was with me. Guess there's no perfect family.

Dingwall set down a barrel full of fish "Found someone have you? I don't like to brag, but I've become a bit of a ladies man." Yeah, he's not lying. I've heard recently that women flock to him, for some inexplicable reason. Macintosh turned to him "I still say using you dragon's sweet scent to attract women is cheating." OH, that's why. Great, the world makes sense again.

Dingwall crossed his arms "It's not my fault that your dragon shocks any girl you flirt with"

Macintosh grumbled "Irritable creature"

MacGuffin turned to me "Anyway, does she know you like her?"

Macintosh questioned "More importantly, does she like you?"

"I don't know." i replied

Macintosh stated "Come on Hiccup, women can be fickle creatures at the best of times. She must have given you a hint"

I scratched the back of my head "Well, she did say I was amazing." They looked baffled at me. Dingwall finally said "That's not a hint."

Macintosh exclaimed "That's a bloody slap in the face! Go after her, talk to her."

I said nervously "I don't even know if I could do that"

MacGuffin said (in a thick Doric accent I could barely understand)
"That is something I can understand. I find it difficult to talk with women too"

Macintosh stated "Don't overcomplicate things you two. Hiccup; try taking an interest in her interests. Just don't start sewing just to get to know her. I tried that, nearly lost an eye to those needles."

A servant came out "My lords; supper will soon be served"

Macintosh exclaimed "Excellent!"

Dingwall agreed "Aye, I could use some food after today"

They followed the servant inside. I decided to stay out. I wasn't very hungry. That and I needed to think about what they said. I looked over to where Merida and her brothers were. Another servant (Maudie I think her name was) seemed to have come out to tell them about supper as well. The brothers almost seemed to chase Maudie inside to get supper.

Merida on the other hand held back and petted Wildfire affectionately. She looked over my way and she saw me. She then jumped on Wildfire and bounded over. I could feel my heartbeat pickup when she was in front of me. "Hey Hiccup" she greeted.

"Good to see you Merida. How were lessons?"

She groaned "Awful. Lessons with you are a lot more fun"

I smiled "Come now, they can't be that bad"

She shrugged "Granted, she's not so much of a perfectionist anymore. Still, I wish she could relax a bit. I feel that she's beginning to think that Wildfire might eat someone" Wildfire huffed at that.

"Oh she couldn't do that, too many bones to digest" I joked.

She chuckled "Anyway Wildfire needs her own meal. Will I see you inside Hiccup?"

"Maybe, I have something on my mind I want to deal with first." I confessed, though it's not as much something as someone. If I didn't know any better, I swore she seemed disappointed. "Alright then. See you later"

"Later"

When she rode around the corner I exhaled deeply and sat against the wall. "Talk to her, get to know her, easy for you guys to say." I grumbled. Toothless looked at me in sympathy.

I sighed "We didn't even meet too long ago and I've fallen for her. If I hadn't spent these last few days with her, I probably wouldn't feel this way." Toothless nodded at me and gave that fierce look of his. It was that look he gave me only when he thought I needed to do

something. He wasn't a defeatist that's for sure.

"What do you want me to do Toothless? I'm little more than a blacksmith. She's a warrior princess that specializes in archery." My mind stopped "Archeryâ€¦.she needs a new bow" Toothless chirped at me confused. I clarified "She can't get a good one around here. Gobberâ€¦Gobber taught me how to make one!"

If I can't convey my feelings to her, but maybe I could show her. Like dad said "Actions speak louder than words." Granted he would say that after a few houses got destroyed during dragon raids and I explained it wasn't my intension. I was still ecstatic; this was something I could easily do! I strained my mind on how to make the perfect bow for her.

No, I have a bow design. I rushed over to Toothless and opened one of the bags. For five years I've kept my mind sharp by writing down every design I came up with in my projects journal. I retrieved it and flipped over to the section I needed. It was unlike any bow known to any of the kingdoms. No one else would have this bow and I was the only one able to make it.

I wouldn't win her heart with this by any means, but it will be a good place to start. I told Toothless "Get the others, I'll need the materials in those saddle bags to do this" He nodded to me (happy to see my change in attitude) and raced over to the stables. I raced to the forge. I could do this; the forge had everything else I would need. I just hope she'll like it.

12. Chapter 12

Chapter 12

****Merida pov****

I awoke bright and early to this new day. Luckily, I was able to finish Mum's lessons yesterday so I was free today. Since Wildfire would still be sleeping I decided to go find Hiccup. Any one that I have asked around the castle hasn't seen him around, so I'll just go to the only other place he'd be other than the sky.

The forge

Once the forge came into view I saw something that caught me off guard. Toothless and Hiccup's other dragons were lying around the forge sleeping. Strange, you would usually find the others in the stable or scarfing down some fish near the kitchen. I walked as quietly as I could between them so that I wouldn't wake them up. Once I entered the building I saw that instead of Hiccup pouring over designs or working metal, I saw him slumped against the wall on the ground, sleeping.

I moved over to Hiccup and leaned over him. Once I got a good look at his bed head, I pushed some hair out of his face. He was kind of cute when he was like this. I stood up in realization to what I just thought and shook my head. I didn't like Hiccup that way. I mean he's a Viking and I'm a Highlander. We couldn't be more different. Besides it not like he feels the same way.

What if he did though? Sometimes I would catch him looking at me when he thought I didn't see. I don't know. I've never felt this way before. Whenever someone tried to court me before speaking my mind came easy, but when it came to Hiccupâ€¦I don't know. Something just held me back. Almost like, I was afraid that he might not feel that way. Oh by the wisps, if only I had a sign that he cared.

Then out of the corner of my eye I noticed something that shined in the light on the table. I couldn't tell what it was since it was covered over with an apron. I walked over to the table and I saw Hiccups journal open. I remember him saying he kept designs in it. The page it was open toâ€¦|.

"Compound bow?" I whispered as I removed the apron and what I saw made me gasp. It was a bow unlike any I had ever seen before. It wasn't the typical longbow, it was something else.

The center of the bow was made of beautifully carved wood; smother than any other I had felt. It didn't go up along the bow though. Attached to the wood were metal arms that made up of the rest of the bow. At the ends of the arms were pulleys with a night fury curled up on etched on each side of them. The bow-string itself even seemed to be far greater quality than any other.

I lifted it off the table and I found it was heavier than a normal bow, but not so heavy lift. Since I was trained with both bow and sword I felt I was strong enough to use it. If anything when I tried to flex the arms they barely moved, but when I pulled on the string it was incredibly easy. This bow was as strange as Hiccup was sometimes. Still I had to try it out. Having a bow around and not use it is just weird. I looked around the forge and found a quiver of arrows leaning on the side of the table. Strangely rather than being made of wood they were made of a strange metal that I didn't recognize. Rather odd, but it's what's available.

I grabbed the quiver, ran over to the doorway and I stopped just before it. I realized that it would be rude of me to take it without permission. I looked towards Hiccup. It would be just as rude to wake him up to ask permission though. I sighed, it's not like I can ask him for permission while he's asleep. I smirked mischievously. Or can I?

I walked over to Hiccup and leaned over him. I whispered "Hey Hiccup, can I go and take the bow out for a spin" Hiccup snored in response. "If you don't say no, then I'll assume you're said it's alright" I continued. Hiccup snorted. I whispered excitedly "You're the best!"

With bow and arrows in hand I ran to the archery range. To try out this strange new bow.

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

I awoke to the wind blowing against me face. I got on my feet and stretched. Funny, I remember closing that door. Maybe I just dreamt about it. I walked to the doorway and saw Toothless yawing and blinking sleep from his eyes.

"It's a great day isn't bud?" Toothless chirped in question. "The sun is shining, the birds are singingâ€¦" I looked over to the table. I continued "â€¦and the bow is gone. THE BOW IS GONE!" I leapt over to the work table and looked all over for it. "No, no, no! It can't be gone!"

"Oh, it's not gone. I just borrowed it for a while" I heard

I stood straight up from shock and turned to the doorway to see Merida standing there with the bow in her hand. Oh Odin, this wasn't supposed to happen this way. I stammered "Hey Merida. I see you have that new bow I made"

She examined the bow "Yes, I do. After using this I've guessed that you made this specifically for me. Am I right?" I gulped nervously at this. Well, here goes nothing. "Yeah, yeah I did make it for you. D-Do you like it?" I asked, dread filling me up.

"Like it? I LOVE IT!" she exclaimed. She rushed over to me and gave me a great bear hug that lifted me off my feet. When she put me back down it felt like she had broken one of my ribs.

"This bow is amazing Hiccup! Come on, I want to show you." she grabbed my hand and dragged me out of the forge. I did my best to keep up so she wasn't dragging me all the way to the range. I felt like a rag doll the way there. When we were there she let go of my hand and took her place in front of a target.

She took out an arrow from her quiver. She began as she drew the bow "At first I found it a bit strange that the bow required so little strength just to pull, considering how stiff the limbs were. I wasn't sure if it was any good. When I fully drew the bow thoughâ€¦" She fully drew it to prove her point. The way I designed the bow was to take the stress off Merida when the bow was fully drawn. "It takes little to no effort this way, I could keep this up forever" She loosed an arrow and it flew to the target (to the center of the target).

"At first I thought that it wasn't that much different from other bows other than requiring less strength for the same result, butâ€¦" She aimed for the new target that hung from the tree (the one Wildfire hit) and loosed another arrow. The arrow flew through the air and hit the target. Though she only hit the inner ring.

"I could barely hit the target before. This bow is fantastic! Superior accuracy and range than any Bowyer in the land could create. With this bow I can hit any target whenever I want to" She held the bow up "I think this will be my last new bow" she said happily. I felt pride flow through me, like Gobber said "A blacksmith only truly know he's done a proper job when the customer is happy"

"I don't understand why you would make metal arrows though" she said obviously confused

I clarified "It's too dangerous to use normal arrows. Once you loosed them they would just break hurting you and not your target." Merida nodded in understanding. Sadly when I tried out the bow initially I found out wooden arrows won't work the hard way. Good thing there were only a few splinters though.

She walked over to me with a smile on her face "Well, I think this has earned you something. How would you like to go for a ride later?"

"What?" My mind instantly thought of something other than what she probably meant.

"Yeah, a ride over to the standing stones. The place where first met. Oh and bring your sword too."

"Ok, I have time today" I agreed

She smiled "It's a date then"

* * *

><p>Originally this chapter was going to be longer but once I started writing it I decided it was too much content and just cut it in half. In other words, to make up for the long wait the next installment should be up pretty soon.

13. Chapter 13

Chapter 13

****Merida pov****

We were at the Standing Stones waiting for Hiccup; it was already late in the afternoon. We agreed to meet here after our group flying lessons at noon. I got to say we've come a long way from where we were. Luckily for us the boys wanted to end things quickly since they were trying to woo some fair maidens with their dragons. Unfortunately, instead of the two of us coming here together Hiccup had to hold back because Da wanted to talk with him. So I decided to get cleaned up and have him meet me here.

I rambled to Wildfire "Well here goes our first date. Well technically we didn't say it was a date. I did say it was a date, so it was. Wasn't it?" I looked towards Wildfire. She shrugged at me at me and gestured at the sword at my side. Almost questioning "If this was a date why do you have a sword?"

I answered "I'm not the kind of girl who gets wooed by a gift or two. Or the kind for long walks on the beach or having poetry recited to her." She rolled her eyes at me. "So I decided to spend some time with him where we first met, which would have meaning to us and spar with him. After all, I enjoy a good spar and he's a Viking so he must as well" She snorted at me as if she thought it was a terrible idea. Wildfire then nudged me and turned her head to the sky. Then just like how we first met, Hiccup landed on the very same spot.

"Sorry I'm late Merida" he said

"It's fine. What did Da want to talk with you about?" I asked

"He suggested that I forge weapons for the guys as well. Said he didn't want people thinking I was playing favorites." I cringed slightly. Hiccup did something nice for me and ended paying for it in the end. As if he read me he said "Its no trouble though. I still

have Gronckle iron to go around fortunately."

"Gronckle iron?"

He explained "Meatlug ate a strange assortment of rocks one day that didn't agree with her stomach. After the contents ended up everywhere I found that the material was stronger than anything I knew of. It's the metal I made your arrows out of."

I nodded. He asked "So what did you want to do out here?"

I explained to Hiccup what we would be doing. Although he found it odd to come all this way for a spar, he still drew his sword (he didn't ignite it). Alright I'll admit the spar wasn't the best of ideas but it's what I came up with. Besides I've been itching for a good fight for a while.

We each took our positions and engaged each other. It's safe to say after the match it was clear about one thing. He didn't have a clue of what he was doing. Even though he wielded the blade with precision and great timing, he didn't have any form at all. This made him an easy opponent for someone like me. After I knocked him on to his back and sat on top of his stomach to signify my victory.

"Sorry Hiccup, but you still have a way to go before you can best me." I said

He smiled back at me "Duly noted"

I smiled back at him and leaned back. No anger, displeasure, or even resentment at being beaten by a girl. Hiccup really was something else. After I pushed my hair out of my face, I noticed that Wildfire and Toothless were looking at us with wide eyes.

"What is it you two?" I asked.

Their eyes shifted between me and Hiccup quickly. We looked at each other, not knowing what was wrong with them, until we looked at our positions. I didn't realize at the time what I was doing. I was sitting near Hiccup's lower torso. If anyone were to wander by, they would think we wereâ€¦Oh god!

Once this thought entered our minds we each quickly tried to get up from the ground. When I was halfway up though, my foot slipped on the grass. I slammed back down on Hiccup and my head banged against his, hard. I rolled off of him and we each groaned in agony.

Great work Merida. Princess of Grace you are.

I leaned forward and rubbed my head just as our dragons came over to see if we were alright. Hiccup sat up beside me. He remarked "Man, you could split a boulder with a skull like that"

"You ok Hiccup?" I asked embarrassed

"I'll live. Merida, your hand" I looked at my hand to see some blood from a cut. I must have cut my hand on a rock when I fell down. It was shallow and would close up soon enough but it bled a bit. Hiccup grabbed a roll of cloth from a saddle bag "Here let me" He began to wrap the cloth around my hand. "Isn't this typically supposed to be

woman's work?" I asked nervously thinking of how the servants would treat Da's wounds.

"We're not typical people Merida" he replied calmly. It was true; we weren't how you would define normal. A warrior princess and a small Viking, we were definitely against the grain. When he finished wrapping my hand, we got caught looking into each other's eyes. I could get lost looking into those emerald eyes.

"Merida, I just wanted to say that the reason I made the bow was because Iâ€¦Iâ€¦."

I shushed him "Hiccup. I knowâ€¦and I like you too" Then before my courage left me I closed the gap between us and kissed him.

Men have kissed my hands or my cheeks, but this was my first real kiss. I may have leaned against him a little too much because I could feel him fall backward with me. Then we stopped. I didn't even have to look to know that Toothless moved so that we could lean against him as we kissed. After that we practically melted into each other. This was...amazing! I didn't want it to end. Sadly we needed to breathe. When we separated, we were both breathed deeply and took in big gulps of air.

"Wow" I whispered

"Yeah" he replied

Toothless and Wildfire roared in union. Almost as if they were congratulating us on finally doing this. We chuckled at them and I sat beside Hiccup with my back to Toothless. Hiccup inquired "So what exactly are we now?"

I smirked at him "A couple of course. Although we probably shouldn't tell anyone about us just yet, not everyone likes you. If they find out your probably a dead man" Oh no, this sounded like something from one of those terrible romance stories mum made me read when I was younger.

Hiccup sighed "If they find out about us, I'm dead. If they find out I'm a Viking, I'm dead. I've been between a rock and a hard place before back on Berk, but man this takes the cake"

That sparked my curiosity "Berk? Is that your homeland? Berk?"

He froze. I guess he hadn't meant for that to slip out. He seemed to have a habit of letting things slip once in a while. This subject though it feltâ€¦dark, like it was one hell of a skeleton to find in his closet. He turned away from me "Yeah, the isle of Berk. That's where I'm from."

"Why aren't you there now?" I asked

"It's not much of a home anymore" he muttered

"What do you mean?"

He closed his eyes his eyes and he bent forward. It looked as if someone stabbed him in the heart. Toothless worriedly looked at him and then he turned to me. The look he gave me practically screamed

"YOU FIX HIM RIGHT NOW!" I nodded in understanding to him and I wrapped my bandaged hand around his "I'm sorry. Youâ€¦..you don't have to talk about it if you're not ready"

His face softened and he opened his eyes "Thank you Merida" I squeezed his hand in assurance and smiled. Once he sat up again, I rested my head on his shoulder and he wrapped his arm around me. Even though Hiccup recovered Toothless was still gave me a distrusting look. Until Wildfire remedied that by biting at his ear, they glared at each other for a moment. After that things finally settled down and we all just sat there together and watched the sun set between the trees.

Thought this day had its ups and downs, as first dates go this definitely topped the rest.

14. Chapter 14

Chapter 14

****Merida pov****

It's been some time since myâ€¦outing with Hiccup. In between the lessons or Hiccup being busy with forging away for the boys, we made sure to spend some time together. Although, we haven't met outside of the forge though, Hiccup wanted to finish up the weapons before there was any trouble. Well that and it was the only place where we could get any alone time around here.

I had walked into the forge just as he had put the finishing touches on the weapons. The weapons forged from Gronckle iron were a sword for Macintosh, a spear for Dingwall and an ax for MacGuffin. Just like my bow Hiccup put as much effort in making them shine. Really the quality of these weapons was something else.

While wiping some sweat from his brow he said. "Well that's that. Sadly this was all the Gronckle Iron that I had."

"I know that you needed to create weapons for the boys, but why the others?" I inquired. As I looked at a nearby table there rested two swords, an ax, and a spear.

"I figured I would make them for the lords and your father as well. The happier they'll be, the less inclined to bother me, giving me some free time. Well for us that is." I smiled warmly at the thought that he did that for us.

"Well it's already past supper, I better go give them their weapons" Hiccup said as he began to wrap them up. "Would you mind going ahead of me?"

"Sure, I'll see you there" I said as I kissed him

As I made my way into the castle I thought about the times when we kissed. It always felt right when we did. Not sure why it just did. When I walked through the halls I felt anxious for Hiccup. Even if he's training their sons, the lords and their clansmen were still distrustful of Hiccup. Well hopefully these weapons will fix that.

"Merida"

I stopped and turned to see Mum walking towards me. She stated "Where have you been, I've looked everywhere for you?"

"I was over in the forge"

"Again? Weren't you just with Hiccup this morning?" she asked

I stated nervously "Yes, but Hiccup just finished the weapons and wanted me to tell everyone"

"Excellent. The lords have been grumbling about it for days" she sighed with relief.

"So why were you looking for me?" I asked

"Ah, I wanted to ask you why you've acted strangely for the last few days. It's almost as if you have something to hide" she stated. I froze. It wasn't possible, she couldn't have figured out about me and Hiccup. Oh god what if she did? What if she knew? She was smart enough to figure something like that out.

I rolled my eyes at her while trying to calm down "Honestly Mum, when have I ever tried to hide something from you?"

"Well, there was the time when you didn't tell me that the pastry was enchanted!" she stated crossly

"Oh for the thousandth time Mum I'm sorry!" I said

"Sorry? I got turned into a bear!" she argued

"Well I got you changed back didn't I?"

"At the last possible second!" she countered

"Uh, am I interrupting something?" we heard.

Mum and I turned to see Hiccup standing there awkwardly with the weapons, while looking nervously between us. Mum straightened up "Nothing of importance Hiccup. Those are the weapons I assume."

"Yes Queen Eleanor" he replied

"Well then let us continue on our way then" Mum said she turned down the hall and continued to walk toward the throne room. When Hiccup was beside me he asked "Turned into a bear?"

"I'll tell you later"

* * *

><p>When we entered the throne room Mum called for everyone's attention so that Hiccup could give them their weapons. One by one he presented them with their arms and they were surprised that Hiccup went to the trouble of creating weapons for Da and the lords as well.<p>

"This sword has near perfect balance" Lord Macintosh marveled as he examined his own sword

Lord MacGuffin stated as he whirled around his axe "Aye, but these weapons seem lighter than they should be. This new metal of his seems mighty peculiar to me."

Hiccup reassured "I assure you Lord MacGuffin these weapons are far stronger than any other within this hall" The men around us mumbled in disbelief. Many of them said that Hiccup was trying to cheat them.

Dingwall scoffed "These weapons better than our own? Our weapons forged by DunBroch hands with DunBroch iron in the land of DunBroch, I highly doubt that." I heard many hear, hears from that.

Da said "Well Dingwall, let's put your money where your mouth is"

Da walked over to a nearby empty table with the sword Hiccup made for him. He then withdrew his own sword and threw it on the table. With Hiccup's sword in hand he raised it above his head and brought it down upon his own blade. When the two blades collided Dad's sword one moved and no one said anything. When he brought it down I expected Da's sword to be cracked, dented, or even bent. I didn't expect Da's sword to shatter into a thousand pieces! The sight of one of the greatest swords DunBroch had to offer break like thin ice shocked everyone in the room, everyone but Hiccup that is. He actually seemed pleased with his work.

Da's laughter boomed through the hall curing us from our shock. He shouted "Now this is a sword! I'd say you lost that bet Dingwall."

All of a sudden the lords and their sons looked at their weapons in wonder and their clansmen crowded around them to get a better look at them. To prevent Hiccup and I from being trampled we moved over to the wall and watched them show off their new weapons to each other.

"You did pretty well Hiccup" I commented and he smiled back at me

Da came over to us and said "Aye laddie she's right. If I didn't know better I'd say that your craft is better than our own royal blacksmith"

"Thank you King Fergus" he said

Da waved it off "Forget the formalities already lad. You're among friends here." He looked over back to the men who had begun to eat and drink merrily. Lord Dingwall yelled to him "Hey Fergus, how about a drinking contest?"

"HA! It's no contest with you as an opponent" Da said as he walked over to him.

As we watched the clansmen eating and drink I had an idea. I whispered "I think we just got our alone time"

He smiled "Agreed, let's head out while they're not looking"

* * *

><p>Eleanor Pov

After I noticed that Hiccup and Merida were sneaking out of the room I contemplated following them to find out what was going on. But that would have been rude so I decided to tend to the family tapestry. All those years ago Merida mended this tapestry and I find again and again I have to go over the stitching. We'll I didn't mind. It was a reminder that a relationship must always be maintained. I stopped for a moment when I heard the door open.

"You're muttering again"

I gave Fergus an annoyed look as he sat in front of me. "Shouldn't you be drunk from your little contest" I inquired

"Nah, Dingwall was always a light weight, but I'll admit I am a bit tipsy" he answered. I huffed at him and returned to my work.

"Alright Eleanor what's eating you? Are you worrying over her dragon again?" He asked

I lowered my needle and sighed "No. Something seems different between Hiccup and Merida, and I can't put my finger on it."

Fergus agreed to my surprise "Aye, your right. Something is different; I'd say they became good friends. They bonded quite a bit thanks to their dragons. Which is a great thing; she didn't have many friends growing up"

"Well yes butâ€|. I don't know how to explain it. Something's nagging at me and I can't help it." I said exasperated.

"What is it? A mother's intuition; or animal instinct?" he joked

I cuffed his shoulder "Oh Fergus. Ever since I became human again, you've teased me about being animal."

He pointed out "Only since you've changed since you've changed back. After all, you've loosened up quite a bit compared to when Merida was growing up."

I agreed "Aye, I supposed I have. Since that time I never wanted what happened to happen again. Stillâ€|"

Fergus stopped me "No still. You being over protective of Merida, you think she's going to in some terrible danger because of these dragons. She's strong and for pity's sake she's an adult now. You can't protect her forever."

I chuckled "Aye I suppose your right. Though there is a change in them, I just don't know what."

He stood up and patted my shoulder "Ah you'll figure it out eventually. Though I doubt it's anything of importance." As he left the room he said "You're talking about this like they're in some secret relationship."

When he left I chuckled at the thought. Merida sneaking around, hiding a relationship with a boy from the kingdom. It was preposterous. Merida has always been upfront about her feelings. Never in a thousand years would she go to all the bother of that. Sure she was secretive about the pastry, but it was only because she did not want to get married.

When I was finished, I decided to head off to bed. At this time of night there was no one wandering about, seemed like everyone but I was sound asleep. As I walked through the halls I passed the Lords rooms only to hear snoring loud enough to wake a hibernating bear. I turned the corner and I stopped in shock. I was looking down the hall to Hiccup's room, but it wasn't his door that startled me.

It was the wisps that stood before.

In the hallway floated over a dozen wisps looking at Hiccups door. Before my eyes one by one they disappeared. The last one however turned to me and waved itsâ€¦limb at me, as if saying 'move along, nothing to see'. It then turned back to the door and disappeared like its brethren.

After what I saw I left with a quickened pace to my chambers. My reason for doing this, well I am obviously exhausted and imagined the whole thing (hopefully). Or even worse there really were wisps in the castle. Wisps were spirits that guided you to your fate, but at times they would warn you about what awaited and then and only then would they ever gather in a human home.

To see them here and now would mean that a danger greater than these dragons was coming

Oh please, let it be exhaustion

15. Chapter 15

Chapter 15

****Merida pov****

I was having a nice sleep until someone woke up in the middle of the night by loud voices. Argh, don't they know it's rude to wake someone by whispering so loudly. For pity sakes no one is up at this time of the night. As I groggily opened my eyes I reached for the flint and candlestick on my bedside table only to knock it over. As I blinked sleep from my eyes I threatened "Alright, whoever decided to wake me will have that candle shoved so far up their arse that they willâ€¦!" I couldn't finish my threat, when I saw what woke me.

A wisp

My room, there is a wisp in my room. Wisps were hard to find in the forest let alone in a castle. As I lay here, the room was illuminated by the wisp. The wisp then disappeared and then reappeared by my door and motioned for me to follow it and then disappeared to the other side of the door leaving the room in darkness.

Losing no time I got out of bed and walked over to my wardrobe to get myâ€¦BLOODY! Ow, blast it! I stubbed my toe on the wardrobe! As if

hearing my thoughts the wisp then appeared back in my room casting in it it's light once again.

"Was hitting my toe my fate?" I snapped

Of course, the wisp didn't respond

Ignoring the pain, I pulled on a robe over my nightgown. By the light of the wisp I exited my room and just like in the woods a trail of wisps appeared. I had no idea where the wisps wanted me to go, but I followed them anyway. As I walked through the halls I thought about the tales Mum told me about the wisps. That they would only be in a castle if a disaster was coming. Were they trying to lead me to prevent it? When I came to the end of the trail I looked around and found myself.

In front of the door to Hiccup's room

What? Were they saying our relationship was a disaster in the making?

The trail of wisps then disappeared and I was left in the hall with on at the door. Using its arm it motioned for me to knock on the door. "What? Are you lot trying to be matchmakers now?" I whispered. Its response was to disappear, leaving me alone in the hall. I walked up to Hiccup's door and stopped myself from knocking, after all I didn't want to wake him. Then I saw a light flickering from beneath the door. He must be up so I knocked.

Behind the door I could hear the shuffling of feet, and then the door opened revealing Hiccup in a grey tunic with a bewildered look on his face. "Merida? What are you doing up?" he asked

"I could ask you the same thing?" I responded

"Nightmare. You?"

"Ah, something woke me"

"And you just decided to pop by?" he said skeptically

"Yeah, guess so. Mind if I come in?"

He moved aside and I quickly walked in, then just as fast Hiccup closed the door. The room was lit brightly and guessing by the candle wax he's been up for a while. Hearing a snort from Toothless I saw that he too was up with us. So I decided to give him some attention. He does like being scratched behind his ears.

"You visiting me in the middle of the night may not be the best of ideas Merida. What if someone saw you?" he said worried

I said as I petted Toothless "One: No one's up. Two: If they were up they're likely to be too drunk to be in the state of mind to remember" I said. Hiccup smiled and shook his head inclining he'd like to argue more but was happy that I was here anyway. I then left Toothless and I went over to stand by his bed.

I asked "So, what happened in your nightmare?"

"Iâ€¦.I don't think I want to talk about it"

"Oh come on, it's just a dream. It can't hurt anyone"

"Still, I'd prefer not to" he said

I sighed and sat down on his bed. Whatever his dream was it must be related to his people for him to be this tight lipped. I don't normally get this nosey about other people's business but with Hiccup it felt personal. Ha, maybe I should just beat it out of him.

As I looked around the room I noticed that besides the original furnishing there was only Hiccup's armor in a corner along with Toothless saddle. I found that a bit unnerving, that as quick as Hiccup came into my life he could leave it just as fast. As I looked at the saddle bags I noticed something poking out, a horn I believe. Out of curiosity I walked over to the saddles and opened it. When I removed what I saw it turned out to be â€¦..

"A Viking Helm?" I murmured

It was, granted the leather of the helm was a little singed on the one side. Did he own anything that didn't seem to come from a fireplace?

Hiccup turned to me and I saw that he hesitated for a moment before stating. "Yeah, that's my helm. I usually try to keep it in the bag with me. Don't want one of the servants to find it and everyone discover I'm a Viking." I nodded and rubbed my hand over the top of it marveling at the workmanship. Strong and sturdy like most of what Viking culture seemed like.

Hiccup continued as he sat down on the bed "It's a memento of my motherâ€¦..It's half of her breastplate" Once I heard that I stopped rubbing the helm and looked at Hiccup alarmed. "Are you serious?" I asked

He nodded in response trying hard not to smile at my expression, although Toothless didn't seem to have a problem snickering at my expense. So I put the helm back into the saddle bags and restrained myself from wiping my hands on my robe.

Hiccup now had a smirk on his face "Don't worry Merida I did something similar when I first received it"

Anxious to change the subject I asked "So, yer Mum was a warrior?"

He stated "Honestly, I don't even know. She died when I was very little and no one really liked to talk about it."

Hiccup asked "Hey, how come I haven't seen any women warriors in DunBroch? Well, there's you of course, but I haven't seen anyone else"

I answered "Ack, this is DunBroch. Women are expected to be lady like. Mom used to be especially forceful of that. For most of my life she was like this." Doing my best to imitate her I said "_A Princess is expected to be lady like, no weapons, skilled in many things and everything about her must be perfect._"

Hiccup chuckled "Sounds like she used be to be a bit a slave driver."

I chuckled as I sat beside him "A bit yeah. Well, I answered your question, so how about you answer one of mine. What was it like on Berk? Women wise."

Once the word Berk passed my lips Hiccup froze just like on our first date. I had hoped that Hiccup might be a bit more forthcoming since he didn't seem to mind talking about the helm. Just as I was about to give up hope he said "Well, the women were treated just like the men."

I asked through shock (half that he answered and half at what he said) "Why?"

He rolled his eyes at me "When you have dragons breathing down you neck you're not too picky on who has the axe." I nodded at the logic. He continued "Of course, they were considered moreâ€|valuable for a lack of a better word. There weren't many women on Berk. So if you didn't find someone you would a bachelor for the rest of your life. Like Gobber."

"Gobber?" I asked

"Gobber, he was a big guy with a beard and â€|..you know what. It would be easier just to show you" he explained. He got up and moved over to his saddle bags and rummaged through them. After wondering what Hiccup meant, he removed something from the bags. He then came back over to the bed and I saw it was a book.

It wasn't the book of dragons; it was a thicker book with a plain cover. Hiccup then flipped through the pages quickly. When he found the page he was looking for he placed the book on my lap. I gasped at what I saw. The drawings, I knew Hiccup was an excellent craftsman, but even his art work was beautiful.

On the page it was titled 'Gobber' and on that page were several drawings of a sturdy blond man that appeared to almost be made of as much wood and metal as he was flesh. I marveled at the different pictures of him working at a forge, smiling, and petting a sheep. Hiccup said "Gobber was the village blacksmith and the man I was apprenticed under. Like I said before he was a bachelor. He often said there wasn't enough of him to go around for the ladies" he chuckled

I decided to take another chance "What about you're Da?"

Just like when I asked about Berk he froze. He took a lot longer to respond, making me think this was a touchier subject then what Berk was to him. He sighed and closed his eyes. "Page 96" he said.

Realizing what Hiccup meant I flipped through the pages and found his father. If I were to flip through this book myself I would never had known this man was his father. For one the page had the title 'Chief Stoick'

Not Father or Da or Pops, just Chief Stoick.

Yeah, this definitely was a touchy subject

It was only then that I realized that Hiccup wasn't just an ordinary Viking, but the heir to entire tribe of them. As I looked at the man there appeared to be little to no relation physically. If I had to guess he would have been a big man and I mean big, strong too. He could have taken on the huge warrior of Clan Dingwall with little to no problem. He also seemed to have a disappointed scowl carved into his face, like it was his only expression. This made me even more grateful for having a cheerful, encouraging Da in my life.

Hiccup said as he looked at the floor "Dad was big, imposing and usually disappointed in me. Rumor has it he killed a dragon when he was a babe." The pictures here didn't exactly leave much room for doubt about that rumor. Trying to change the mood a little I asked "How did he react to Toothless?"

"He never knew about Toothless but if I had to guess he'd probably have him killed and disown me"

Forget this being a touchy subject Merida, were walking on thin ice

"Hiccup why aren't you with your people?" I asked. Brilliant Merida, real Brilliant.

"They're gone" He answered. He picked up the book from lap and placed it back into his saddle bags. He then said "I've been trying to forget about what happened for some time now so that I could move on."

"Hiccup, forgetting something and moving on are two entirely different things." I stated

He turned to me with a raised eyebrow. I sighed and patted on the bed beside me. When he came to sit by me I started "Mum and I weren't always like this. Remember when you overheard me and mum earlier"

"About her being turned into a bear?" he questioned

"Yeah, well it all started whenâ€¦" I told Hiccup my story. Hopefully when I was finished my Hiccup would understand the point I was trying to get across and maybe later on trust me a little more to tell me about Berk. When I was finished Hiccup looked at me strangely.

I asked defensively "Would you stop looking at me as if I was mental?"

"Merida, if you told that story on Berk they would have tied you up and shipped you off for fear you'd gone mad!"

I said through gritted teeth "Thank you Hiccup, your support is overwhelming"

He held a hand up "I'm sorry Merida I do believe you. After all this isn't something you'd lie about"

I nodded in acceptance. "So how does this relate to forgetting and

moving on being different?" he asked

I explained "Hiccup, forgetting something and accepting something are two different things. If Mum and I simply forgot about what happened to us we would have been back to where we were before, but because we've accepted what happened to us and each other our lives have better then we could ever hope them to be."

"So you're saying rather than forgetting about what happened I should just accept what happened no matter how much of it was my fault?" he said bitterly

"Um, I suppose" I said not convincingly

He looked away from me and said "I don't think I could do that"

I put my hand on his shoulder "You will be Hiccup sooner then you know" I stood up and stretched "Well, I better get back to my room before there's anyone up to notice me walking out of here"

I bent over Hiccup "Will you think about what I said Hiccup?"

He nodded "Yeah, I'll think about it"

I kissed his cheek "Thank you Hiccup. By the way, you may want to cover up that helm up a little bit better next time"

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

As Merida left my side she opened the door slightly and peered around the halls before closing the door lightly behind her. I couldn't believe at what happened because of her. I showed her the book of drawings I made years ago. I only made that book originally because I missed seeing Gobber's smile. Then once I drew him I found myself drawing the rest of the village as well, but I didn't make it to show other people. I guess I showed her because maybe I trust her a little more than I should.

I looked over to Toothless and asked "You think she's right don't you?" Toothless chirped in agreement.

I turned away from him. "Traitor" I said

Before I knew it Toothless grabbed prosthetic and dragged me out of my bed. Once my back hit floor he put his heavy head on me like he did so many times before. Except this time I had difficulty breathing. With what little air I had I said "Toothless get off, crushing not breathing." Toothless then rubbed me with his head refusing to get off.

"Alright, Alright! I'll work on accepting! Just let me breathe!" I exclaimed

Toothless raised he head content with what I said and I took in deep breathes of wonderful, glorious air. Once my lungs had enough air I said "Toothless, I don't think I'm strong enough to accept what happened."

Before Toothless could place his head back on me I finished "Not without some help, Merida's help" Toothless narrowed his eyes at me "and yours Toothless. I'll always need your help" Toothless purred in contentment at me.

I yawned "Well there's still time before sunrise Toothless. Let's get some more sleep" Toothless nodded at me and heâ€|he flopped his head back on me!

"Toothless!"

Toothless merely chuckled at me and got more comfortable. Well at least I can still breathe. Accepting my fate I grabbed a pillow off the bed and put my head on it so that I could rest in relative comfort.

16. Chapter 16

Chapter 16

****Merida pov****

After my chat with Hiccup last night I decided on something. That I should find out what had happened to Berk. Hiccup seemed to blame himself for whatever happened so I don't think he's going to be telling me anytime soon. That leaves me with only one option, an option I would have rather avoided.

The castle library

Ugh, that room full of dusty tomes that practically emanated boredom to me. Heading towards there I had to remind myself that I was doing this for Hiccup. Well it was for me technically, but it was to help Hiccup. Once I entered the library I saw mum. Immediately I thought to come back later since I didn't want her to know I was going to read about Berk but something was off. Mum looked lost, distraught, and afraid.

"Mum?"

She turned to me "Oh, Merida. Are there lessons today that I've forgotten about?"

"No, no lessons today" I said. Forgetting that there weren't lessons today; alright something was definitely off. She said confused "Whatâ€|then what are you doing here? You usually avoid the castle library like it's the plague"

"I came because you looked like something was on you mind" I lied

She sighed "I'm fine Merida, there nothing to worry. Except forâ€|."

"Except forâ€|.what?"

"The wisps" she sighed

"Wisps? You've seen them too?"

"Too? Iâ€|.Whatâ€.When did you see them?" mum asked

"Last night, in the halls"

"Me too, you know what this means don't you" she asked

"What the whole doom and gloom thing?" I joked

She said sternly "This isn't something to joke about Merida. Back before the invasions started I saw them."

"You think this is that serious?" I asked concerned

"I do, but I don't know what to do. We haven't a clue as to what could happen." I looked around. Mum had several books and papers about the events happening inside and outside of DunBroch.

"I guess you've been looking for a while"

"Aye, with no success what so ever" She replied

She straightened up "Well now let's be honest with each other, why are you really here?"

"I already told why" I quickly replied

"So you just happened to walk by and see me?" she inquired. I was going to reply with yes butâ€I immediately remembered the pastry. Lies, it was got us a mess before. We promised each other to work towards a better relationship. Guess that means I have to tell the truth.

"I came in because I wanted to find out what happened to Berk" I answered

Mum blinked a few times; guess it wasn't the answer she was expecting. She asked "Why?"

"From the few times Hiccup talks about his homeland it seems like he carrying a great weight around with him" I explained

"To be expected by someone with survivor's guilt" she replied

"What do you mean?" I asked

"Merida, Berk was destroyed years ago"

"WHAT?!"

She nodded "From what I read Berk suffered a dragon attacked that destroyed both the land and the people. Officially no one survived, though Hiccup proved otherwise" My mind drifted back to our conversation from last night.

"_Hiccup why aren't you with your people?_"

"_They're gone_"

"Iâ€|can't imagine something like that" I said feeling sickened at

the very thought of losing one's people.

Mum said "I can't blame you, such massive destruction to be done in a single day seems impossible, but if we don't figure out what the wisps are trying to tell us we very well may end up just like Berk"

"Berk? Now why are you two talking about Berk?"

Startled mum and I turned to the doorway to see Da standing there waiting for an answer. Before I could reply Mum said "Merida was curious about the homeland of dragons which led us to Viking tribes. Namely Berk"

That was a much better answer then I could have given

Da smiled "We'll it's a good thing you're expert on other nations Eleanor"

"Expert? An expert! That's it! Fergus you're brilliant!" Mum exclaimed

"I am?" he asked confused

"He is?" I inquired

"Yes, you've given me an idea on how to solve my problem." She stated as she put the books and papers away.

"What you're going to talk to an expert?" Da asked

"Yes." Mum said putting the last book away

"On what?" Da asked

Mum said as she left the library "That's none of your concern. Oh, I'll be leaving the castle tomorrow."

"We'll that's what I wanted to talk about. I wanted Hiccup and Merida to go over to the lake to try and show the other lads the dragons at the lake tomorrow" Da claimed

She called back from the hall "A fine idea"

Da turned to me "Do you think she heard any of what I said?"

"Nope. So we got some more clansmen interested?"

Da smiled "Aye, the lads talking about their dragons and the lassies paying attention to them have convinced more of the lads to go for training"

"I'm surprised the lords are allowing this." I stated

Da said "Technically they don't know about this. The clansmen approached me and the boys rather than their lords. So we're going to distract the lords for a little while by trying to get it through their thick skulls that dragon training is going to continue whether they like it or not. Then you and Hiccup take the lads for a little training."

"Sounds like a plan. So how many are going to be trained?" I asked

"We got about a dozen lads made up from the three clans. You know the huge warrior from clan Dingwall actually volunteered" Da stated

"Him?"

"Aye, I don't even know if there's going to be a dragon big enough for him to ride on" he chuckled

"Yeah, we're going to need a pretty big dragon for him" I chuckled

"Aye, well we better get along and get things ready for tomorrow" da said

I nodded and we went our way. I decided to go tell Hiccup the good news. He's going to be so excited about all of this.

17. Chapter 17

Chapter 17

****Eleanor pov****

I had left the castle by horse at midday to begin my journey. Thanks to Fergus, I was able to know what I had to do. I didn't know what to do with the wisps since my knowledge on all things magical is rudimentary, but there was someone who could know. I traveled through the forest and used my previous experience with Merida to travel to the one person who may be the only one to know what was going on in DunBroch and before I knew it, I had arrived to my destination.

The witch's cottage

I dismounted and walked to the cottage. The door was open a crack but inside I could hear her craving inside. I opened the door and found her carving away at a stump. She looked towards me and said "Ah come in, come in; glad to finally have a customer, even if they are related to the one that destroyed my home."

During our little visit to her home, Merida combined some potions which led to a little explosion. The witch was sour about her home but thanks to the amount Merida paid for the spell and carvings she was able to rebuild her home, but lost most of the profit to be made from it.

"Yes, well I came to talk about something" I stated

She said "Come to talk about the wisps have you?" Once she noticed my surprised face she continued "Oh yes, I know about them"

"And you know what it means? I've been seeing them everywhere, even Merida has. Can you help me?"

While she examined her nails she stated "Oh you see dear I'd love to

help you, but currently I'm overwhelmed by being _overstocked _as you can see."

I sighed; merchants seem to be the same no matter where you go. I lightly browsed through her inventory and selected a few bear sculptures I could carry back. As I selected these items the witch cleared a table so that we could sit down. Once all official business was concluded we began.

She began "There now getting to the subject at hand, the wisps seemed to be very worried about what's happening"

I said losing my patience "I know that, but what is happening?"

She stated "Wisps aren't the type to sit down and have a chat with you, but if you have been around for as long as I have, you can figure it out."

I inquired "Then what are they saying?"

"Death, death has come to DunBroch"

Even though I had anticipated something like that it caught me off guard no less. Keeping calm I asked "What do they mean death; will these dragons be enough to destroy us?"

"They're not worried about the dragons; they're worried about just one"

"What could one dragon do to us?"

"More than we could possibly imagine it seems and we're going to find out just how dangerous it is once it reaches Dragon Lake"

"Dragon Lake?! Hiccup, Merida, they're all there! I have to go warn them!" I rose out of my chair and rushed to the door only to stop when the witch said "You do realize it will take you half a day to get there by horse from here and by the time you do, it will already be over."

I turned to her "Over? What do you mean?"

She clarified "I mean the destruction will take but only a few moments. As for whether they'll survive well I don't know"

"What?"

"The wisps aren't talking about what will happen"

"T-Then they'll all beâ€¦."

She smiled "Have faith in them. People as stubborn as them won't die so easily."

* * *

><p>Hiccup pov

We had just arrived at the lake, which took forever since we had so

many to train and so few dragons to fly them. Since it was like that, Merida and I only brought Toothless and Wildfire with us so we could fly back. A dozen people for training; I should have taken them in groups. Oh well, no use in complaining now.

Merida exclaimed "Ah, finally!"

"Sounds like someone is eager to be the teacher this time around" I said

"You could say that." She smiled

I turned to the men "Alright you guys let's getâ€¦"

Out of nowhere came a roar that seemed to cause the ground to shake and your blood run cold. No one moved, except for the dragons. They were no longer peacefully fishing; they were acting out of fear. Some stood frozen and seemed to try and make themselves smaller, while others screeched as they fled. Saying this scene was chaotic was an understatement.

Merida said "Hiccup, what is going on?"

"Run" I whispered

"What?" she asked

"RUN! All of you run, get back to the castle as fast as you can!" I exclaimed

"But the training" I heard someone said

I asserted "If any of you want to live you will run now!"

They didn't need any more convincing as they fled into the woods. I turned to Merida "Merida, you go too"

"What?!"

"I'll stay behind and stop the dragons from following you" I said

"No way! We can take these dragons!"

"Merida, you have to go with them to protect them. These dragons are acting crazy who knows what trouble they'll get in" I stated

"But you'llâ€¦"

"I'll be fine. Please Merida, go"

She gave me a reluctant nod and with Wildfire she rode after her clansmen. I turned to this mess and prayed to every god I knew that it wasn't what I was thinking. Merida thought the problem was the dragons in front of us, but I felt it was otherwise. I knew that roar and I haven't heard a roar like that in five years and I hoped I never would again.

Then like a rising storm I heard it, that strange chirping that I heard those years ago when Astrid and I went to dragon island. The

dragons that had stayed began to act as if some unseen force was trying to control them. I turned to Toothless who was shaking his head violently.

I told him "Come on Toothless. Keep it..."

I was interrupted by the roaring sound of dragon fire. I turned to the forest only to be blinded by the light and my horror that it was burning. Then behind me I heard it land I slowly turned and my greatest fears were concerned.

By the gods this all makes some sort of sick sense, the Dragon raids, and my dreams. I had my suspicions but I had hoped it wasn't so. Just as impossible as it had seemed before I couldn't help but face the truth.

That a Red Death had come to DunBroch

* * *

><p>My apologies for the long wait this time but my work overwhelmed me so I barely had time to work on my fan fiction, but now it's over and I have time to spare. To make up for the long wait, I am currently working on the next chapter for this story and it will be posted sometime this month.

18. Chapter 18

Chapter 18

****Merida pov****

We had only just escaped the flames with minor burns by keeping just ahead of the flames as they jumped from tree to tree. We should have brought some weapons with us, just so we could fight with Hiccup. Once I could see the edge of the forest through the trees I stopped and turned to them.

"You lot head back to the castle, tell them what's going on" I told them

"What do you plan to do?" one of them asked

"I'm going back for Hiccup, we don't leave anyone behind"

"We can't just let you go alone lass." Another stated

"This is order from your Princess, return to the castle." Without so much as a yes, I rode back to Hiccup. We zipped left and right through the burning trees and once we cleared the forest weâ€¦|.

WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE WISPS IS THAT?!

This great mass of scales that stood at the edge of the lake seemed impossibly large. When the mass shifted I realized it wasn't shifting but turning its head, it was a dragon. A dragon the size of a mountain, teeth like trees, claws like swords, and wings the size of storm clouds. I recovered my senses when a blast of dragon fire hit it on the side of its head and then I noticed that Hiccup and

Toothless were in the air attacking it. The beast turned its attention back to Hiccup by trying to bite them while they zoomed around it.

I turned to Wildfire "Well we can't let them have all the fun now can we girl?"

She snorted in response and jumped into the air, straight for the beast's head. I yelled "Over here you great toad!" Wildfire's breath shot straight for the beast's head and landed a hit. The explosion from it was enough to knock the dragon off its feet and made it splash into the lake. We flew over to Hiccup.

"Not bad if I do say so myself" I stated to Hiccup

"Do you ever listen to what anyone else says?" Hiccup questioned

"Not when I know I can handle it"

"You can't handle this thing yet, you're too inexperienced!"

"Inexperienced?! Why you son of a—!" Wildfire banked away from Hiccup and dragon fire separated us. I turned to see the beast spitting fire into all directions almost as if it wanted to set the heavens aflame. Just as Wildfire began to steady herself the dragon had stopped its breathe attack and turned to us. Even from here I could see its eyes narrow at us.

"Picking a fight are we."

Wildfire roared and we zoomed straight for its head on. As we neared the beast its jaws slowly opened and I planned for Wildfire to knock it down again. Once the jaws fully opened I expected to see fire but all I felt was air rushing towards it. Wildfire suddenly stopped her dive and immediately tried to climb back up into the air. She flapped and flapped and went nowhere. The beast wasn't trying to burn us but suck us in.

"A little faster if you wouldn't mind" I cried.

In response Wildfire started to flap even faster but it wasn't enough. Closer and closer we edged to the beast and once we were close enough for it to devour us, something rammed into us pushing us away from its teeth. That something was Toothless.

"So you can handle it can you?" Hiccup called

"Hiccup the tail!" Hiccup turned toward Toothless tail to see what I saw.

That the beast's teeth had shredded it

"Oh come on! I just fixed that tail this morning!" he complained

The beast flew into the air at us. We dodged it but Toothless was losing altitude. When I heard a gurgling sound coming from the beast, Hiccup yelled "The water, get in the water!"

We dived towards the lake and once I heard the roar of dragon fire behind me, we hit the water and we escaped the fire. We were met with cold water at our faces and boiling water at our back. We swam deeper and deeper until we could touch the lake bed in the middle of the lake, but there was still enough light because of the dragon's fire.

Once that light had died, I tried to swim upwards only for Hiccup to pull me down. I turned to see him shaking his head at me and pointing up. I turned to the surface again to see the large shadow of that monster looming over us. It was waiting for us, and once we broke surface it would attack us.

When I saw the shadow had moved on Wildfire and I bolted to the surface. Only when my lungs felt like they would ignite without air did we break the surface. While I greedily gulped down air, I turned to see Wildfire, Toothless and Hiccup all doing the same.

Hiccup sputtered "Merida, are you ok?"

I coughed "I'll live"

"Come on, let's get back to land"

Our dragons swam us to the water's edge. After Wildfire stepped on dry land and I slipped off her and collapsed to my knees. Wildfire rubbed her head against mine.

"I'm alright girl" I told her

"Well that could have gone better" I heard from Hiccup as they slopped onto land. Hiccup got off of Toothless and went around to his tail. "Oh yeah, I'm not going to be able to fix that. Good thing we carried a spare this time wasn't it Toothless" Toothless groaned in response.

I asked "Hiccup, what the hell was that thing?"

He replied with his back to me "Come on, we can fly around the forest fire so we can look for the guys"

"Hiccup!" I whined

He turned to me "It's a called a Red Death Merida. I'll go into to detail when we get to the castle."

19. Chapter 19

Chapter 19

****Merida pov****

"Well that was exciting" I said when I collapsed onto Hiccup's bed

"Really I'd call it crazy" Hiccup replied

Toothless chirped sleepily and laid down on the floor of his room. "Ah bud would you mind moving your tail blocking the doorway"

Once Toothless began snoring I said "Good luck moving him"

"Perfect end to a perfect day" he said

"Aye, no one hurt too badly"

"Some burns, a few scraps. That went rather well, except for the you almost getting eaten part"

"Even more lucky when it didn't notice my clansmen when it flew over them" I asked "Hiccup, have you encountered that monster before?"

He nodded "Yeah, I met one of its species years ago"

"Years agoâ€¦..was itâ€¦..on Berk?"

Hiccup sighed "Yes, well no. I had first met it on Dragon Isle then again on Berk"

"What happened?"

"I'm not ready to talk about"

I exclaimed as I sat up "Oh for the love of, when will you be ready to talk about?! You keep dodging this every time it's brought up. I'm not the most brilliant person in DunBroch but even I can figure out that the dragon is what happened to Berk"

"No Merida, I'm what happened to Berk"

Before I could scold him, mum walked in

"I just got back and everyone was talking aboutâ€¦..oh thanks heavens you're alright." Mum said

Hiccup said "I'm fine too just so you know"

Mum chuckled "I'm glad you've both made it back"

"I thought you'd be moreâ€¦upset" I admitted

"Upset? I'M DOWN RIGHT FURIOUS!" she yelled "From what I heard you went back to face someâ€¦monster after Hiccup told you to leave"

"I wasn't going to leave him behind!"

"You could have been killed!"

Hiccup addressed "Ladies, can we deal with this after we dealt with the dragons?"

Mum rolled her eyes "Speaking of with Fergus and the lords want a talk with you about this dragon"

* * *

><p>*In the dining hall

Da asked "Hiccup, Merida what the men are sayingâ€¦..what is

it?"

"It's called a Red Death" he said

"Red Death?"

"Death, death has come to DunBroch" mum whispered

Da asked "So what kind of dragon is this death?"

"A dragon the size of a mountain" I replied

"You're joking" replied Lord MacIntosh

"You have no idea how much I wish I was"

Lord Dingwall stated proudly "Well the bigger they are the harder they fall"

"A family motto I take it?" Lord MacIntosh joked, which earned a death glare from him

Da asked "What exactly is it anyway, and why haven't we heard of such a dragon from the traders?"

"The Red Death is known as the queen of dragons. It controls other dragons, makes them pillage villages for food and if the dragons don't get enough they get eaten themselves."

Lord MacIntosh mumbled "No more big dragon, no more raids. Neat and tidy."

"As for why you haven't heard Vikings have only encountered the species once before, on Berk"

"Berk?" Lord Dingwall asked

Da stated "Were not adventurers lad, mind filling us in"

Mum stepped forward "The Isle of Berk, home to a tribe of Vikings to the far north. From what I have read from the reportsâ€¦they were destroyed along with their village from a dragon attack. Likely from another Red Death"

Lord MacIntosh turned to Hiccup "Hold on a second. You mean a member of the very same species that wiped out this Isle of Berk is right here, in DunBroch"

"â€¦Yes"

Though we fell silent at this revelation, Maudie ran out of the room screaming down a hall

Lord Dingwall stated "Well, were doomed. Might as well break out the good stuff Fergus"

Da boomed "Now hang on a minute. Nothing that lives is invincible no matter how tough it is. Mor'due was proof of that and he was created by magic. This thing is natural, and if it's natural then it bleeds, and if it bleeds then we can kill it!"

"Well said!" laughed Lord MacGuffin

Da turned to Hiccup "Hiccup, is there a way to kill this thing?"

"If we could light the breathe in its mouth before it ignites it then it will kill it. Dragons are only fire proof on the outside"

Lord MacGuffin asked "How do you even know if this insane plan will work?"

Hiccup "Because it happened on the Isle of Berk. That's how that Red Death was defeated"

Lord MacIntosh inquired "Wait, Lady Eleanor said there were no survivors. So how would you know that?"

"Well, you travel around and hear some thingsâ€|" Hiccup explained

"LADY ELEANOR!"

Maudie came running back withâ€|.oh no Hiccup didn't close his door

"KING FERGUS! I was running past Hiccup's room and I saw this" Maudie said out of breath as she held the item for all to see. The one item that stuck out of Hiccup's saddle bags, his Viking Helm.

Lord Dingwall took the helm from Maudie. "Well now, I believe this explains everything"

"And would you look at that" Lord MacIntosh continued when he was passed the helm.

Lord MacGuffin walked up to Hiccup with the helm and slammed it on his head. "It fits him perfectly!" He finished

Hiccup chattered "Well of course it fits. I traveled to the Archipelago once and they give away souvenir helms before you leave"

Lord MacIntosh said as he drew his sword "Or a more likely storyâ€|.you're a VIKING!"

Lord MacGuffin stated "You've been playing us for fools since the beginning!"

Lord Dingwall said "Aye and maybe all this dragon trouble is because of him!"

"After all the dragons listen to him and Viking's have feud with us. He probably brought them here to ruin us!" Lord Macintosh agreed

Da stepped between them and Hiccup "ENOUGH! Viking or not Hiccup has given us a way to survive this mess!"

"A way?! This whole mess is likely his fault!"

As Da argued with them Mum told me "Take Hiccup to his room and don't

come out till I tell you"

Without another word I grabbed Hiccup while they were busy and left the hall.

20. Chapter 20

Chapter 20

****Hiccup Pov****

"Well that was a disaster" I mentioned

Merida confirmed "Yeah, mission accomplished. Instead of a lack of trust they had for you before, now once this is all over they'll want you head on a pike"

"Most likely" I heard

I turned to the door way to see Merida's parents standing there. They entered as Eleanor stated "But I think they'll have to go through us first"

I bowed "Your majesties"

Fergus waved it off "Hiccup I told you before there's no need for formalities your among friends here. Well, the only friends you have left in the entire kingdom"

"The lords and their men have left; they have gone back to the territories to gather men" Eleanor stated

Merida urged "But it'll be a massacre"

Eleanor affirmed "They don't care Merida. Like everyone else their bullheaded thinking they can bring down mountains"

Fergus said "All but some"

I turned to the doorway once again and I saw MacIntosh, MacGuffin and Dingwall standing there

"You guys are still here?"

MacIntosh boomed "Aye, Viking or not Hiccup we're with ya"

MacGuffin confessed "Against our own clans will"

Dingwall mentioned "Well, it's not like we didn't have our suspicions about you in the first place"

I said bewildered "What?"

MacIntosh divulged "Well, we thought that it was unusual that you knew so much about dragons and when you mentioned Dragon Grass came from the Archipelago We put two and two together."

Merida asked "You guys figured that out together"

Apparently it's not just me who's surprised

Dingwall claimed "We may not be the brightest but were not the dimmest either"

I addressed "Are you guys sure about this, this is kind of going against your entire people?"

MacIntosh answered "We already discussed this amongst ourselves Hiccup. We would rather be hated for saving DunBroch than to do nothing, even if our names are scorched from our family tree"

Fergus said "Aye, we're all with ya laddie. So what's the plan?"

I couldn't believe it. In the short time I was here I had done more than I ever expected. I stopped the hunting of dragons and now to do what I had wished I had done on Berk, stop the war.

I announced "The Red Death likely has a nest somewhere in DunBroch and lives exclusively in volcanoes and mountains. Are there any places that fit that description?"

Eleanor pondered "For a dragon of that size there are mountains in the north and south of us but in the east there is a volcano but hasn't been active in generations"

I nodded "Tomorrow we'll split up into teams and scope out these areas. This will be purely recon, no combat"

Once they nodded at me I continued "Dingwall and MacIntosh you two will search out the mountain in the north. MacGuffin and Merida will search out the mountain in the south. Toothless and I will search the volcano in the east"

I turned to Fergus "There's a chance that the raids will be more frequent since the Red Death is becoming more active, is there any of the men in the castle that can be distributed to the villages?"

Fergus said "Aye, I'll bring the castle guards down to the minimum number and move the rest to the nearby villages"

I declared "Alright, We better get some sleep we're going to have a busy day tomorrow"

* * *

><p>Yes, I am back and I have not dropped this story. Originally I wanted to finish this story before Christmas but I have been busy with college ****and other activities** for the past couple of months. **

**1. I have the rest of the plot hammered out ready to be written up
>

2. There will be 7 chapters more to wrap things up (might be less if I combine some of them)

**3. I'm going to try to post another chapter this month but I have a

project to work on this month, so no promises**

21. Chapter 21

Chapter 21

Hiccup pov

"We're almost there bud; see the volcano is just over there"

Toothless groaned at the thought of travelling even farther. We had travelled all morning just to get to the volcano and now finally we'll be able to confirm if it's the nest.

"Bud if we find it we're going to need to kill it. You ready?"

Toothless roared in response and rushed to the volcano

We can't let anyone else get caught up in this

A screech was heard from our left and we saw a group of Monstrous Nightmares fly into a cave. Just like the time with Astrid we followed the dragons through a cave system into the heart of the nest. Looked the same as the last nest; bleak and oppressing.

"Alright, bud here we g-"

"So what's the plan Hiccup?"

We jumped and turned to see Merida and Wildfire just behind us

"Merida?! What on earth are you doing here?" I whispered

"Well you obviously knew that the death was going to be in the volcano, so we ditched MacGuffin. Come on, we can take it" she retorted

"Did you forget what happened last time?"

"No, but we're better now. We know what to expect, right girl?"

Wildfire nodded in agreement. From the looks on the faces I'm not going to convince them otherwise. So much for not getting anyone else involved.

"Fine we have toâ€¦"

A great roared shook the cavern and the dragons went wild. Flying and shooting fire in every direction. The Red Death knew we were here and was making the dragons deal with us.

"These dragons are mad Hiccup"

"The Red Death is controlling them. We have to get out of

here"

"Back the way we came we can't fight the Death and all these dragons"

We had barely escaped the nest the number of dragons was overwhelming. More than I ever see in the other nest. Once we got away from there we flew straight back to the castle for the rendezvous. When we landed we went to the forge to find MacGuffin, Dingwall, and Macintosh there waiting for us.

MacIntosh stated "We found nothing Hiccup what about you?"

"Hiccup found the nest" Merida proclaimed

"Bravo Hiccup"

MacGuffin asked "It's at the volcano?"

Merida said "Yep, along with every other dragon"

"Ha, now we can strike back" MacIntosh exclaimed

"Aye, now we can-"

Dingwall was interrupted by loud shouts echoed from the courtyard. Man I thought dragons were noisy. You could bring down the castle with that.

"What's all that shouting?" Merida asked

"That would be Lord MacIntosh and Lord MacGuffin arguing with your parents once last time to see sense"

We turned to see Lord Dingwall standing there looking cross as ever.

Merida stepped forward "What are you doing here Lord Dingwall?"

"I'm here on behalf your fathers to ask you one last time to join you clansmen in battle to defend our home."

MacIntosh stated "We are protecting our home, in our own way"

He exclaimed "No! That Vikings way, not our way."

Merida stated "His way is ours now."

Merida and Lord Dingwall glared at each other

"Fine then, but we will show that you are wrong" Dingwall threw his weapon that I made on the ground. "We have cast aside those despicable tools the Viking made and we will show you that DunBroch can triumph over any threat. Whether it be Viking or dragon"

He walked away from us. I can't help but feel that in my attempt to save DunBroch from dragons that I instead had torn apart families. When lord Dingwall walked around the corner Dingwall ran after him.

"Dingwall!" Merida yelled

I responded "Leave him Merida. It's family, that's something they need to deal with themselves"

****Lord pov****

"Stubborn bunch if fools" MacIntosh exclaimed

The three lords are argued with Fergus till night fall. When they realized they could not talk sense into him they left in a huff.

"Aye, that Hiccup's silver tongue has charmed beyond reason"
MacGuffin

"But not us" Dingwall stated

"If only we knew where the beast nested"

"Oh but we do MacGuffin" Dingwall teased

"You old troll what is it you know?"

"Well after a wee talk with my lad he told me where it is. In the volcano no less" Lord Dingwall proclaimed

"Of course, those beasts love fire." Macintosh claimed

MacGuffin laughed "Aye, it's a good thing your lad stayed behind"

"Good thing you lad had enough sense to see he was in the wrong"

MacGuffin said "Good now we can go kill it with good old DunBroch strength"

MacIntosh replied "And when we do our lads and Merida will come to their senses and we won't have to deal with any more of this dragon nonsense"

"And we'll be rid of that Hiccup"

22. Chapter 22

Chapter 22

****Hiccup pov****

I awoke before the sun was even up, I had made sure of that. Toothless and I had to make sure we left early. If the others knew that we wanted to fight the death alone, they would only follow me to it. If we got there first, we could finish this.

"You ready bud?"

Toothless nodded at me

When I opened the door I was met with Dingwall of all people. Man, he looked especially rough this morning.

"Jeez, Dingwall you don't look like you got any sleep"

Dingwall said "H-Hiccup, there's something I need to tell you."

"What is it?"

Dingwall stuttered "I may have, told my dad where the Red Death is"

I exclaimed "WHAT?! Oh Odin, no wonder they left so soon after you father left"

I cursed Dingwall for this. If they knew where the Death was then they would have travelled straight to it through the night to prove that their DunBroch strength was greater than dragons. These guys were as stubborn as any Viking.

I said "They have a head start on us, if we leave soon; we can make it there at the same time"

"Dingwall wake the others, tell them to get ready to ride" I ordered

Dingwall begged "Wait Hiccup, I need you to understand why I told him"

Hiccup answered "You told him because you thought that it would make everything alright. That all those times when your dad gave you this disappointing scowl, would be worth it in the end"

"Hiccup youâ€¦ you understand?"

"Come on Dingwall, we don't look like the stereotypical warrior of our lands do we. Plus, you dad kind of gave that look a lot whenever I saw him."

"Yeah he did, didn't heâ€¦ I go wake up the others." He replied

Dingwall ran out of the room. Knowing those three it be some time before they're awake enough to fly anywhere.

"Alright bud, let's move out before them"

* * *

><p>We were lucky, no one noticed us leaving. I didn't want to do this to them, but they can't handle this. Not a Red Death. If we fought the Red Death first, we can finish this. No matter the cost, the others can't get involved.<p>

"Alright Toothless, we can get there before anyone else if we leave nowâ€¦"

I was interrupted by the sound of an arrow hitting the post beside his head. He turned to see Merida standing there, a very livid

Merida.

Merida asked "And where do you think you are going?"

I nervously answered "Uh, Me and Toothless were just getting ready a little earlier than you guys"

"To leave early and face the Red Death alone" she said as she walked to us

"W-What? No, just gettingâ€¦"

Another arrow lodged in the post

Merida scowled "I've been up for the past hour thinking and you know what? I honestly can't take you feeling sorry for yourself anymore"

"What are you talking about?"

"YOU! You're so wrapped up in whatever the hell happened to your people, that you can't even see that we need you here! So what if their dead, what does it even matâ€¦"

I shouted "Their dead because of ME!"

I admitted "If I had never been born, if I had never existed they would still be alive. They are dead because of me. Odin knows they didn't deserve how they died. I might as well have cut their throats myself; it would have been more merciful. That's why I have to do this Merida; so no else will get caught up in this."

"Hiccup, you need to tell me what happened"

I scowled "I don't need to tell you anything"

Merida stated "Hiccupâ€¦..for as long as I've known you, you've seemed to be hiding something, and once we became a couple, I knew that what you kept secret was killing you. It feels that if you go as you are now, you will die Hiccup"

She walked in front of me and cupped my face. We looked into each others eyes. Those that could stare right through me and see what was there.

"Hiccup you've been running from your past for five years, it's time to stop running"

I sighed "Alright, I'll tell you what happened on Berk"

* * *

><p>Originally, I was going to update during march break, but dada da my computer went down. At first I thought it was a corrupted system, so I tried everything I could. I was able to save my data, but I didn't have a working computer. My only choice at the time was to do a system restore, with a 5 month old backup. After that, it worked, for about two days. Days and days of troubleshooting later turns out my hard drive was pretty much dead. Bought a new hard drive, installed it, and everything seems to be working fine now

after a couple weeks. If I didn't have my sister helping me with this, I don't know I would have been able to accomplish this. I might have lost all my important files without her help (including this fanfic). This was a dark time in my life.

****Morale of the story:****

****1) Family is important****

****2) Try not to give up hope when it seems hopeless****

****3) Back up, back up your data as soon as you can! Don't repeat my mistakes!****

****P.S. I'm going to try to pump out another chapter to make up for the delay, but it's near the end of the college semester for me. No promises.****

End
file.